













JOHN STUBBS BAKER AND SON,  
*Tavistock Street, Covent Garden.*

1817.







# STUDIES IN HISTORY;

CONTAINING THE

## HISTORY OF ROME,

FROM ITS EARLIEST RECORDS TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE;

IN A

### *SERIES OF ESSAYS,*

ACCOMPANIED WITH

REFLECTIONS,

REFERENCES TO ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES, AND

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS.



BY THOMAS MORELL.

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Opus agredior opimum casibus, atrox præliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace  
æquum; non tamen adeo virtutum sterile, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit.

*Tacit. Hist.*

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# STUDIES IN HISTORY.

## THE HISTORY OF ROME.

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### BOOK I.

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FROM THE BUILDING OF THE CITY, TO ITS CAPTURE BY  
THE GAULS.

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### ESSAY I.

*Introductory. The origin of the Romans—the birth of  
Romulus—the building of Rome.*

FROM A. C. 1182—753.

AMONGST the numerous objects of human research, few are more interesting, and perhaps none more difficult of access, than those which relate to the origin of nations. The desire of tracing stupendous effects to their minutest causes is almost universal, but its accomplishment is by no means easy, even to those who pursue it with the most diligent investigation. The traveller, who would discover the source of an impetuous torrent, and mark the precise spot, where its crystal spring first issues from the rock, must frequently penetrate almost inaccessible wilds, and explore the labyrinths of many a subterraneous cavern, through which it flows; and not unfrequently after all, he finds that his labours terminate in disappointment and uncertainty. It is thus that the moral and political inquirer, who would investigate the earliest traces of ancient empires, must explore the dark mazes of fabulous tradition; and traverse the wildest regions of conjecture, ere he can hope to attain the object of his pursuit;

nor is it improbable, that all his researches will in like manner terminate in “vanity and vexation of spirit.”

To no people, either in ancient or modern times, will these remarks apply more justly than to the ROMANS, whose origin was as obscure, as their future destinies were great. All who are conversant with the annals of ROME, during the vigour of her republican, or the more splendid period of her imperial government, must have been solicitous to discover, if it were possible, the tenderest germ of that political eminence which she acquired amongst the nations, and which continued to flourish through so many ages. Whilst contemplating the achievements of her most renowned heroes, the inquiry must have frequently presented itself to the reflecting mind, “who were these hardy sons of fame—these mighty conquerors of the world—whence did they spring—and what was their primitive condition?” But to such an inquiry, all the authentic records of antiquity, will furnish no satisfactory reply. Even Livy himself, the most faithful and diligent of the historians of Rome, (to whose labours we are indebted for many of the facts which will be detailed in the following essays,) abandoned the attempt as utterly impracticable, after the lapse of so many ages of intellectual darkness, and amidst such a mass of fabulous and contradictory statements. He seems to have considered the vague traditions, which were commonly believed in his day, rather as poetical fictions, than as monuments of authentic history. Instead therefore of attempting to disentangle the web of fancy, or to define with accuracy the boundaries of truth and fable, all that is intended at present, is, to relate as briefly as possible those circumstances relative to the origin of the Romans, which appear most probable, without either affirming or denying their authenticity.

Previously to the building of Rome, ITALY contained a great number of independent states, and rudely fortified cities, of which little more than the names have been preserved, and whose geographical situation it is now difficult to define. Some of these petty kingdoms were inhabited by native tribes, who had probably existed for many ages in that country, and were therefore called *Aborigines*.—



Others were established by colonists from Gaul or Greece, who had acquired at different periods a precarious settlement, by conquest or treaty. None however of these primitive inhabitants of Italy deserve particular notice, but the *Etruscans*, and the *Latins*; the former on account of their early civilization, and the latter, as having given birth to the founder, and first king of Rome.

The *ETRUSCANS*, (or as they were sometimes called the *Tyrrhenians*,) flourished in Etruria, a province of ancient Italy, long before Rome existed. That they were of Phœnician extraction is rendered probable by many circumstances connected with their history, but especially by the similarity of their language, manners, literature, and superstitious rites. From the scattered records of this people, and the specimens of their progress in useful arts, which are still preserved in the cabinets of the curious, it may be inferred, that they were a well-disciplined and highly-cultivated nation, when the surrounding tribes were immersed in barbarism. Their commerce was extensive, and their skill in agriculture, navigation, and military tactics most remarkable, considering the period in which they flourished. To them, the first inhabitants of Rome were principally indebted for the education of their youth, the elements of science, and many of their civil, political, and religious institutions.

The first kings of Latium of whom tradition speaks, were, Picus, Faunus, and Latinus. During the reign of the second of these princes, and about 70 years before the destruction of Troy, EVANDER is supposed to have conducted a colony of Arcadians from Greece to Latium. By the permission of Faunus, he built a city upon an uncultivated hill on the banks of the Tiber, which he called *Pallantium*, after the name of the capital of Arcadia. He is said to have introduced amongst his Latin subjects many civil and religious rites, similar to those which prevailed in Greece. The following reign was rendered memorable by the arrival of ÆNEAS and his companions, after having escaped from the calamities of the Trojan war, and the perils of a tedious voyage.\*



When these illustrious strangers landed on the shores of Latium, the reigning prince was engaged in a war with the Rutuli, a small, but martial tribe, whose territories bordered on his own. On being informed that an hostile band had effected a landing on his coast, he hastened to meet them, expecting to find a rude and undisciplined banditti who would retire at the approach of his army. But on the contrary, he found to his surprise, a well-appointed band of veteran warriors, drawn up in order of battle, fully prepared for defence, and at the same time holding forth the olive branch of peace. Latinus, unwilling to risk an engagement with these formidable strangers, sounded a parley; and, having learnt the name, country, and misfortunes of the Trojan adventurers, offered them his friendship, and ratified the alliance, by giving his daughter Lavinia in marriage to their chief.

The nuptials of Æneas and Lavinia rekindled the flame of war in Latium. Turnus, the queen's nephew, who had made pretensions to the daughter of Latinus, enraged at the loss of his anticipated prize, joined the Rutuli, and incited them to renew the contest. This warfare terminated in the subjugation of the Rutuli, the slaughter of Latinus and Turnus, and the quiet accession of Æneas to the vacant throne of Latium. The latter days of the Trojan prince were occupied with building the city of Lavinium, erecting temples and altars, and instituting religious festivals in honour of the gods of Greece, as well as of those who were previously worshipped by the Etruscans and Latins. For this reason he was honoured by his superstitious descendants with the appellation of "the pious Æneas." After a reign of four years, he was killed in a battle with Mezentius, king of Etruria, and was succeeded first by Ascanius or Iulus, (who founded the city of Alba Longa, which afterwards became the seat of government,) and then by Æneas Silvius, his younger son by Lavinia. Thirteen kings of his family reigned successively in Alba, of whom nothing memorable is recorded.

The last of this dynasty was Numitor, who was scarcely seated on the throne of his father Procas, when Amulius, his younger brother, formed a conspiracy

against him, wrested from him the crown and sceptre, murdered his only son, and compelled his daughter Rhea Silvia to take the vestal vow, by which she devoted herself to perpetual virginity. Having thus, as he supposed, removed every obstacle to his ambition, and opened to himself and his family an unobstructed passage to the Alban throne, he flattered himself that a new and permanent dynasty was established, which should bear his name, and continue in the line of his descendants. But these acts of injustice ultimately recoiled upon himself. Rhea Silvia, the only surviving child of his dethroned brother, having been violated by some unknown warrior, whom the ancients dignified with the name of Mars, produced two sons at a birth, the elder of whom was named Romulus, and the younger Remus. These infants were no sooner born, than by an express order of the inhuman tyrant, they were exposed on the banks of the Tiber; but, before the tide had risen sufficiently to wash away the slender bark in which they were deposited, they were discovered by Faustulus, the king's shepherd, and brought up by his wife Acca Laurentia as her own offspring. This woman is supposed on account of her disorderly life to have been commonly called *Lupa*, or a she-wolf; which circumstance probably gave rise to the absurd fable of Romulus and Remus having been nourished by a wolf.

Unacquainted for many years with the secret of their birth, these foundlings grew up in rustic ignorance amongst the shepherds and herdsmen of the valley; distinguished alone from their associates by the superior dignity of their mein, and a spirit of enterprise far beyond their years. The manners of the age and country in which they lived, were calculated to form and cherish this adventurous character. Accustomed to defend their flocks from beasts of prey, and their lowly habitations from midnight depredators, they were early habituated to hardships and dangers, which gradually prepared them for higher achievements. At length these adopted sons of Faustulus acquired such reputation and influence amongst the companions of their youth, as to collect an adventurous band, by whose aid they were enabled to



enter the palace of Amulius, put the usurper to the sword, and reinstate their grandfather in those regal honours, of which he had long been unjustly deprived. Nor were they contented with having restored to Alba its rightful sovereign; their restless ambition excited them to new projects. They proposed to plant a colony, and build a city on one of those hills, amongst which they had formerly fed their flocks. They invited the companions of their youth, and others from Alba and Lavinium, who were favourable to the enterprise, to assist them in its execution. They fixed upon the Palatine hill, and proceeded to consecrate the ground on which their projected city was to be built, by the celebration of auguries and other religious observances, customary on similar occasions. But scarcely had the work commenced, when a quarrel arose between the twin-brothers, which ended in the murder of Remus by the hand of Romulus. No longer controuled in his schemes, the survivor applied himself with redoubled vigour to the prosecution of his design, till the city was built; if indeed a contemptible village can be so denominated, which contained, according to ancient tradition, about two thousand straw-roofed huts, defended with a wall of clay, and occupied by a rude and lawless rabble. Yet such in her infancy was proud imperial ROME, the conqueror of nations, the subverter of ancient and flourishing empires, the mistress of the world, so celebrated in future ages, for the wisdom of her councils, the splendour of her triumphs, and the extent of her dominions; this event is generally supposed to have taken place towards the end of the sixth, or the beginning of the seventh Olympiad, that is, about 753 years before the Christian æra.

Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 1. passim. Liv. Hist. Rom. lib. 1.  
Plut. in Romul. Aurel. Victor. de Orig. Rom.



## REFLECTIONS.

Whilst uncertainty and obscurity characterize, in a greater or less degree, all the pursuits of human wisdom, we have reason to be thankful, that “a more sure word” of divine revelation has been granted to us, which is as “a light shining in a dark place.” In those ancient and infallible records, which were first dictated by the Spirit of Truth, and have since been miraculously preserved from age to age, facts are revealed which had otherwise been buried in perpetual oblivion—doctrines are taught which would surpass all human belief, did they not rest on divine authority—and scenes are unfolded, of which the mind of man could never have conceived. By the glimmering taper of traditional history, we are able to trace but a few steps backward, ere we find ourselves immersed in thickest shades of ignorance and doubt—but by the light which Revelation sheds, we can recur, not merely to the origin of one family, tribe, or nation, but to the birth of Nature herself, and the beginning of Time. We can discern the first morning-beam darting through the empire of darkness, in prompt obedience to the Omnipotent mandate of JEHOVAH, “Let there be Light.” We see the sun for the first time shining forth in his meridian strength and splendour—the moon entering on her majestic course, and walking in brightness through the heavens—the celestial luminaries, either fixed in their distant stations or harmoniously moving in their appointed orbits—all the various orders and classes of created beings springing into existence, and moulded into the perfection of beauty—but especially man, the last and noblest of the inferior works of God, shining forth in the moral image of his divine Creator! Whilst contemplating this scene of varied wonders, and devoutly exploring the records of these remote, but not uncertain events, who can forbear exclaiming, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! in wisdom hast thou made them all. For thou didst speak and it was done; thou commandedst and it stood fast. Thou

hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

In the preceding sketch of the origin of Rome, there are some obvious points of *resemblance* to the commencement and progress of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. It appears, that the calamities and dispersion of the Trojans gave rise to the Roman empire—an empire, whose founders were rude and illiterate, whose origin was lowly and obscure, and whose first subjects were few and despised; yet which was preserved and nurtured amidst the storms and perils of war, till it overspread the earth, and gathered its laurels and trophies from remotest climes. Thus lowly was the origin, thus small the number, and thus despised the condition of the first champions of the Christian faith. Thus did the persecution and consequent dispersion of the primitive disciples of Christ, tend to the furtherance of the Gospel, and lead to its propagation throughout the world. Thus was the infant Church nurtured amidst storms and dangers, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of her adversaries, "mightily grew and prevailed." And thus too, will this heaven-protected empire pursue its triumphant career, till its boundaries shall stretch "from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth."

But there are also some points of extreme *difference* between the rising empire of Rome and the kingdom of the Messiah. The former was founded on usurpation, and upheld by violence and oppression; but justice and judgment are the foundations of the latter; "a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom," whom God "hath set upon his holy hill of Zion." The far-famed city of Rome was built by a colony of sanguinary warriors—its soil was saturated and its walls were cemented with blood—its first inhabitants subsisted chiefly by plunder and rapine, and were defiled with every kind of loathsome impurity—but the hallowed city of our God is filled with the meek, the merciful, and the pure in heart—on its walls and gates, its temples and palaces, is inscribed, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace; good will toward men"—and on the very garments of its citizens is written, "Holiness to the



Lord." Rome has long since fallen; her capitol, her temples, her altars, and all her magnificent edifices, have perished in the wreck of ages; she ultimately became the prey of those nations, which once trembled at her power, or cowered beneath her wing: but never shall the Church of God be subverted: never shall the gates of hell prevail against this imperishable structure—for it is founded upon a rock. The Messiah's kingdom shall prove an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endureth throughout all generations!

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## ESSAY II.

*On the Institutions and Government of ROMULUS.*

BORN A. C. 771. REIGNED 37 YEARS.

DIED A. C. 716.

ONE of the most remarkable circumstances connected with the origin of Rome, is, the rapid transition of its primitive inhabitants from a rude and almost barbarous state of society, to the discipline and subordination of a well-organized government. It could scarcely have been expected, that a company of fugitives, a band of needy adventurers, with arms in their hands, and accustomed to predatory exploits, should suddenly submit to legitimate authority, and instead of struggling for property or power, resign themselves to the guidance of salutary laws. This is a sufficient proof of the policy and wisdom of their elected Chief, and fully demonstrates the excellence of his administration.

No sooner was the building of the city completed, than Romulus applied himself to the internal regulation of the colony assembled within its walls. On numbering them, he found they amounted to 3000 infantry, and 300 cavalry. But as this was a small number, compared with the wishes and hopes of their leader, he resolved to open an asylum for the reception of all who were com-



pelled by their necessities or their crimes to leave their homes, as well as for those who, from curiosity, the hope of gain, or any other cause, were desirous of change. By this means, considerable numbers of strangers and fugitives were attracted from neighbouring states, and even from the remotest parts of Italy. Rome being thus replenished with a mixed multitude of inhabitants, Romulus divided the entire population into three tribes; to each of which, a third portion of the city was allotted. Each of the tribes was subdivided into ten *Curia*, and these latter were again distributed into ten lesser ramifications, called *Decuria*. The superintendence of these wards, or compartments of the city, was assigned to certain officers, who on account of the stations they occupied, were called *Curiones* and *Decuriones*. The territory of Rome, which is said to have extended at that time about six miles beyond the walls of the city, was divided into thirty portions, one for each of the *Curia*, exclusive of two shares of land which were reserved, one for the king's revenue, and the other for the support of the priesthood.

Besides these minuter classifications, the population of Rome was divided into two orders, the *Patrician* and the *Plebeian*; the former consisted of those who were distinguished from their fellow-citizens by age, wisdom, valour, or property; the latter included the mass of the Roman people. The rights of patronage belonged exclusively to the *Patricians*, who considered themselves bound to advise, protect, and, in every possible way, assist their *Clients*; and in return for the privilege of choosing a *Patron* from amongst the *Patricians*, the *Plebeians* considered themselves bound to aid their protector in the execution of his civil or military functions. This regulation, which bears a strong resemblance to the feudal system, that afterwards prevailed throughout Europe, was admirably adapted to the existing state of society, as it rendered both the higher and lower classes mutually dependent.

The form of government instituted by Romulus was one, in which liberty and authority were wisely blended. In this respect it resembled the British Constitution; for the supreme power was balanced between the *King*, the

*Senate*, and an *Assembly of the People*. The authority of the *King* in civil affairs was exceedingly limited; he could do little more than convene the deliberative bodies, and, having received their instructions, carry into effect their decrees. But as General of the Army, he exercised an uncontrouled authority over all the military forces of the kingdom. He was attended on all occasions by twelve *Lictors*, armed with *fascies*, or officers carrying axes surrounded by bundles of rods, which were intended to represent the administration of justice. When at the head of the army, he was surrounded by a guard of three hundred chosen youths, who, on account of their agility, were called *Celeres*. The *Senate*, as first constituted by Romulus, consisted of 100 Patricians, who were the official counsellors of the king. These were elected by the people, and were usually called *Fathers*, either on account of their age, or their supposed parental attachment to their fellow-citizens. They deliberated on all questions of policy or religion submitted to them, either by the King, or by an Assembly of the People, and decided by a majority of suffrages. To this august body, all the civil, military, and religious dignities were exclusively attached for several centuries. So great was their influence, that they were considered the living guardians of the State, and supreme interpreters of the law. The *People* were assembled for the election of Magistrates, the enactment of laws, and the determination of war or peace; subject, however, to the final approbation of the Senate. These assemblies were usually characterized by violence, and proved a perpetual source of discord; yet to the energy they inspired, are to be ascribed the vigour, the triumphs, and the unrivalled prosperity of the Roman Commonwealth in future ages.

Besides these political institutions of Romulus, there were others which related to the worship of the gods. Many of these religious rites were borrowed from his Etruscan neighbours; some were derived from the Greeks, and had probably been introduced by Evander or Æneas; but others were ceremonies ordained by himself, suited to the superstitious character of his subjects, and evidently intended to answer political as well as religious purposes.



The principal of these were, the appointment of a temple, a priest, and a separate deity to each of the *Curia*, or wards of the city; the establishment of a college of priests, Augurs, and Aruspices;\* and the institution of festivals in honour not only of the gods of Greece and Italy, but of others also who were elevated to that dignity by himself, such as the goddess of *Counsel*, the *Asylæan* god, *Jupiter Feretrius*, *Jupiter Stator*, &c.

It seemed necessary to be thus particular in describing the ancient constitution of Rome, because it formed the basis of that towering superstructure which was afterwards reared; and also, because there will be frequent occasion to allude to some or other of these institutions of Romulus in subsequent essays.

The Roman government, thus constituted, gained strength daily, and became increasingly formidable to its jealous neighbours. But as its population consisted almost entirely of unmarried youths, it became the obvious policy of its founder, to engage them in matrimonial alliances. For this purpose ambassadors were sent to the Sabines and other contiguous states, to propose a league, the leading article of which should be, the marriage of their daughters to the Roman youth. But these overtures were rejected with scorn: the messengers were treated with great indignity; and it was tauntingly proposed, "that the Romans should open an asylum for female fugitives and slaves." This insult was soon afterwards

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\* The *Augurs* or Soothsayers were persons appointed to interpret dreams, oracles, prodigies, &c. and to foretel future events by what were considered prosperous or disastrous omens. They did this by observing remarkable appearances in the heavens, the flight of birds, the motion of beasts, or any unusual accident. Romulus was considered skilful in this art, and being well aware of its influence upon a superstitious multitude, instituted three augurs, one for each tribe. Their number was afterwards augmented at different periods to fifteen. The *Aruspices* were so called from their office of inspecting the altars and predicting future occurrences from the appearances of the victims offered in sacrifice. Both these kinds of divination were held so sacred by the Romans, that it would have been considered profane in the highest degree to found a city, build a temple, proclaim war, elect magistrates, or hold a public assembly, without having first consulted the *Augurs* and *Aruspices*.



signally avenged by Romulus, who seized and carried off a great number of Sabine virgins and others, who were assembled with their parents at a festival, which Romulus had proclaimed for that purpose, though professedly in honour of Neptune. All resistance was vain; the Romans were alike deaf to threats and entreaties; the bereaved and injured parents were haughtily driven from the city, and their daughters detained, in violation of all the rights of hospitality and justice. The whole number said to have been carried off was 683; of whom, one of distinguished beauty, (named Hersilia,) was chosen by Romulus, and the rest were distributed amongst his bravest warriors; all of whom were immediately married according to the Roman custom.

The injured parties breathed revenge and slaughter. Borne along by their inflamed passions, rather than guided by prudence, they flew to arms; but, instead of acting in concert, they separately invaded the Roman territories, and thus became the easy prey of the conqueror. The inhabitants of Cœnina, of Crustumium, and of Antemnæ, were successively vanquished and their cities taken. The Sabines alone acted with determined courage. They assembled a numerous army, and marched to Rome with a resolution to conquer or die. The conflict was most arduous, and the issue long remained doubtful, till it was decided by an act of female tenderness and heroism which deserves to be particularly recorded. The Sabine women who were now become the wives, and, in some instances, the mothers of Romans, rushed into the field of battle, with dishevelled locks, and in mourning attire, threw themselves among the spears of the combatants, and, by their entreaties, their tears, and the eloquence of their distress, obtained a suspension of hostilities, which was quickly followed by a treaty of union. In consequence of this seasonable interference, the Romans and Sabines became one people; the city was enlarged by the admission of thousands of Sabine citizens; a hundred of the most distinguished were added to the Roman Senators, and Romulus consented to divide the honours of royalty with Tatius, the king of the Sabines, who reigned jointly with himself about five years. As this increase of wealth

and power could alone be ascribed to female influence; distinguished honours were decreed by the Senate to the Sabine women. They were exempted from many burdens common to their sex, and enjoyed many immunities forbidden to others. In public they were treated with marked respect, and their children were distinguished by an ornamented dress.

After the death of Tatius, Romulus became more arbitrary and oppressive. He elevated himself above the laws, and superseded the authority of the Senate. He undertook and carried on wars without the sanction of that legislative body, and even in defiance of its decrees. Having gained many victories over the Camerini, the Fidenates and the Veientes, whose countries he ravaged, whose chief cities he pillaged, and whose inhabitants were sold as slaves, he enriched his troops with the spoils, and divided amongst them the conquered countries, by his sole authority. Irritated with these arbitrary proceedings, the Senate determined privately to assassinate him. The authors, circumstances, and manner of his death were carefully concealed through fear of the people; and lest suspicion should attach to themselves, the Senators circulated a report, that he was carried up from the midst of them into heaven, and was now to be considered as the tutelar deity of Rome. This tale was implicitly believed, and in consequence of the credit attached to it, altars were erected, and sacrifices offered to him under the name of Quirinus. The death of Romulus took place in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and thirty-seventh of his reign.

Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 2. Plut. in vit. Romul. Liv. Hist. lib. 1. Flor. Hist. Rom. lib. 1. Aurel. Vict. de Vir. Illust. &c. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

It may be inferred from the preceding narrative, that interest as well as duty requires subjection to lawful authorities. For what had been the fate of the Roman



colony, when first planted on the Palatine hill, and dwelling in an almost defenceless city, if, instead of organizing themselves into a compact society, and submitting to those laws which wisdom or policy suggested to their leader, they had remained a lawless rabble, unconnected by any civil or social tie, and intent alone upon their separate interests or private advantage? Would they have risen to political eminence amongst the nations, or would they not rather have quickly become the prey of their more powerful, because more civilized neighbours? It is most evident that the strength and security of a state, depend upon union; and union implies subordination on the one part, as well as legitimate authority on the other. Such is the reciprocal relation and mutual dependence of the several orders of society, so closely are the several members of the social body knit together, and so completely are their interests blended, that no part, however small, can suffer injury without the whole being injured; and in the prosperity of the minutest part, all is prospered. But if the mere apprehension of danger, or a sense of interest, were of themselves sufficient to induce subjection to the higher powers amongst heathen nations, shall not the divine precepts and the sacred obligations of the Gospel of Christ, much rather, incline us to submit to existing authorities, not only "for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

It is painful to observe how frequently religion, or rather its semblance, has been rendered subservient to state-policy. This was the practice of all heathen legislators and princes. That religious ceremonies were so employed by Romulus is evident, from the care he took to associate the office of High Priest with his regal dignity—from the appointment of auguries, over which he exercised a supreme controul—from his erecting a temple to the Asylæan god, as an expedient for replenishing his thinly-inhabited city—and especially from his celebrating a splendid feast, under the pretence of honouring Neptune, but in reality to obtain wives for his soldiers by the most fraudulent means. But unhappily this prostitution of religious rites to political purposes is not confined to the pagan world. Nations professedly Christian

have in like manner profaned, by the unhallowed touch of worldly policy, the ark of God. Their annals are filled with details of political projects, covered with a flimsy veil of external piety and apparent zeal. They furnish many examples of institutions, which seemed to originate in fervent devotion, but were really intended to gratify the ambition, or nourish the avarice of their projectors. Such were the Crusades of former ages, and such have long been the monastic institutions and splendid hierarchy of the Church of Rome. These, and all other attempts to secularize the Gospel of Christ, are directly opposed to the evangelical canon of our Divine Legislator, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Great as was the injustice and cruelty of Romulus, in tearing away hundreds of defenceless females from the arms of their affectionate parents, and forcing them into a reluctant marriage, it will bear no comparison with the barbarity of the deliberate violator of female chastity, who first vitiates and then basely deserts his hapless prey. Let Christian parents learn from this fragment of ancient history to restrain their beloved offspring from those indulgences which may prove ensnaring and seductive—to repress their vain and dangerous curiosity—and especially to beware of introducing them to those scenes of moral pollution, from which they can scarcely escape without defilement. How bitter must be the regrets, and how painful the self-accusations of those, who are conscious of having thus been accessory to the infamy and ruin of their own offspring. And let unguarded youth beware of pursuing those amusements, and seeking those sensual gratifications, which have proved fatal to the peace, the reputation, and the lives of myriads of their fellow mortals. Let them not venture too near to those rocks and shoals amongst which so many of their fellow-voyagers have been dashed in pieces. Let them contemplate with salutary fear the scattered wrecks of those, who having followed a multitude to do evil, drowned themselves in perdition.

Happy is it for mankind, when female influence is employed in works of benevolence, like those which reflect so much honour on the Sabine women. Youthful



charms and feminine beauty, (especially when aided by tender entreaties and flowing tears,) plead with an eloquence which the most ferocious and sanguinary can scarcely resist. How desirable is it that these powerful agents, which have too often been offensively employed in fomenting discords or inflaming the passions of mankind, should be used as instruments of peace and means of reconciliation! Exert then your influence, ye virtuous fair—that influence with which the God of Nature has richly endowed you—in tranquillizing the passions, allaying the resentments, and restraining the vehemence of those, who own your sway! Employ all the persuasive eloquence of chaste affection, in ceaseless efforts to diminish the sum of human guilt and misery; so will ye prove yourselves to be angels of mercy, sent in compassion to mankind, to sooth their sorrows, and alleviate their accumulated sufferings!

It appears that Romulus was assassinated as a tyrant by the same persons, who immediately afterwards consented to worship him as a god! Such was the absurdity of Paganism! Creatures the most contemptible were enrolled amongst their deities. Characters the most flagitious, whose frantic ambition inspired universal terror, or whose crimes rendered them objects of detestation, were no sooner dead, than they were held up to the credulous multitude as objects of religious adoration! To such extremes of infatuation and delusion is the human mind capable of proceeding, when destitute of the light of divine Revelation! How great was the forbearance of the Most High, who winked at these former times of ignorance and idolatry, instead of executing sudden vengeance! But let it be remembered that the Sovereign of the Universe “now calls upon all men every where to repent,” and has assured them, that “except they repent, they shall all perish.”

## ESSAY III.

*On the reigns of NUMA POMPILIUS, TULLUS HOSTILIUS, and ANCUS MARTIUS.*

FROM A. C. 715—640.

THE death of Romulus was followed by a suspension of the regal authority, which lasted about twelve months. During this interregnum, the affairs of state were administered by each of the Senators in rotation five days successively. But the Roman citizens at length grew weary of this incessant change of rulers, and demanded of the Senate to proceed without delay to the election of a King. The Senators yielded to a request which they feared to resist, and making a merit of necessity, relinquished an authority which they felt themselves unable to retain. A general assembly was convened, in which, after much deliberation, it was resolved that the new king should be elected from amongst the Sabines, but that the right of choice should be vested alone in the ancient Roman Senators. By this expedient the jealousies which had arisen between the new and old inhabitants of Rome were happily removed, and both parties were satisfied.

The electors without hesitation made choice of NUMA POMPILIUS, a Sabine philosopher, who was then about forty years of age; of noble birth; of eminent piety, (according to the heathen acceptation of that term;) and, considering the age in which he lived, of distinguished literary attainments. His habits of life were unostentatious and self-denying; and his philosophical opinions appear to have been purer and more refined than any of those systems, which afterwards prevailed both in Italy and Greece. It was with the greatest reluctance, that Numa, on being apprized that the choice of the Senate had been approved and confirmed by an assembly of the people, consented to quit his beloved retirement, and exchange his favourite studies for regal honours. He yielded, however, at last, to the earnest solicitations of



the Roman deputies, enforced as they were by the entreaties of his most valued friends, and ascended the throne amidst the applauses and acclamations of all his subjects.

As Numa was a stranger to the ambition and military ardor that fired the breast of his predecessor, it was natural that he should pursue a different line of policy. Instead of seeking an increase of territory by the devastation and subversion of weaker states, he sought principally to ameliorate the character, soften the manners, and tame the ferocious passions of his warlike subjects; to unite them more firmly in the bonds of peace and social order; and thus to lay a foundation for their permanent happiness and repose. The measures adopted during his tranquil reign seem to have been calculated to answer these valuable purposes. Lest his example should tend to cherish a martial spirit, he dismissed the corps that formed his military guard, assigning as a reason for disbanding them, that he had no need of soldiers to protect him from those whom he loved, and who were cordially attached to his person and government. With a similar design he erected a temple to Janus, who was represented with two faces looking in opposite directions, to denote the necessity of foresight and retrospection in all military undertakings. This temple was to stand continually open in time of war, and to be shut during the continuance of peace. Prompted by the same pacific disposition, he encouraged agriculture, by dividing the lands, which Romulus had annexed to the Roman state, amongst his poorer subjects, and offering rewards to those who cultivated them with the greatest industry. Perceiving that the distinction between the citizens of Rome, who were of Sabine, and those who were of Roman origin, proved a fruitful source of discord, he abolished the distinction by dividing them into classes, consisting severally of persons following the same trade or occupation; to each of which companies, certain privileges were attached. The laws he enacted, (some of which have been preserved,) were characterized by a regard to justice and benevolence; particularly those which prohibited fathers from selling their sons for slaves after their marriage,

and which enjoined upon masters, a regard to the lives and comfort of their slaves. Amongst other proofs of his attention to the improvement of science, may be mentioned his attempt to reform the Calendar, and to reconcile the difference between the Lunar and Solar Year, by the insertion of a short intercalary month in every alternate year.

But the reign of Numa is chiefly remarkable as the æra of Roman Mythology, when the greater part of those ceremonies were devised, which continued to be religiously observed by the Romans during many ages; and when the several orders of the priesthood were instituted, of which frequent mention is made in the annals of that republic. Fully aware of the influence of religion, (as far as it was understood by him,) upon the happiness and well-being of society, he laboured diligently through his whole reign to impress his subjects with a veneration for the “gods of their idolatry,” and to form them to habits of superstitious devotion. With this view, he built temples, erected altars, instituted festivals, appointed numerous augurs and aruspices, who were to be consulted on all occasions both common and extraordinary, and constituted a great variety of priests and priestesses under the names of *Flamina*, *Salii*, *Feciales*, *Vestals*, and *Pontifices*, over whom he himself presided under the title of *Pontifex Maximus*.\*

Yet notwithstanding the institution of an almost endless variety of superstitious rites for vulgar use, ancient

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\* The *Flamina* were priests, whose ministry was confined to some particular deity, by whose name they were designated, as *Flamen Dialis*, a priest of Jupiter, *Flamen Martialis*, a priest of Mars, &c. The *Salii* were the official guardians of the *ancilia*, or sacred shields that were reported to have fallen from heaven, and were deposited in the temple of Mars. The *Feciales* were heralds, dispatched on all solemn public occasions to demand a reparation of injuries, or, in case of refusal, to declare war against the offenders. The *Vestals* were priestesses of the goddess Vesta, employed in the service of her temple, and especially charged with the duty of keeping the sacred fire on her altar continually burning. The *Pontifices* were the most sacred order of priests, on whom devolved the superintendence of all sacred festivals and religious rites, both on common and special occasions.



historians tell us, that Numa entertained much purer and more refined conceptions of the Deity, contemplating him as "the self-existent Principle of all things, invisible, immortal, and intelligible to the mind, but not to sense." It is even asserted by Plutarch, that he prohibited the setting up of any image, by which to represent the Deity, either in human form or in that of any kind of beast; a prohibition which was regarded by the Romans through several centuries.

Having arrived at the advanced age of eighty-three, and reigned in uninterrupted peace forty-three years, Numa died, universally lamented as the parent of his people and benefactor of mankind. According to his request, his body was interred in a stone coffin, and his writings both in Greek and Latin, (which were numerous,) were deposited in another by its side. These were taken up about 400 years after, and burnt by order of the Senate, that none might be involved in the guilt of prying into such sacred mysteries!

TULLUS HOSTILIUS, who was chosen after a short interregnum to succeed Numa, possessed none of the mild and amiable virtues of his predecessor, but rather inherited the adventurous ambition of the founder of the Roman state. Such a prince was not likely to maintain that peace, which had been so long preserved by the conciliatory measures of Numa, and had proved so great a blessing to the commonwealth. Soon after his elevation, an occasion of waging war with the ancient and flourishing city of Alba was eagerly seized, the real object of which was to ascertain by an appeal to arms, which of the two cities should be the metropolis of Latium. The military strength of both these kindred states was quickly brought into the field. At the same time, the Veientes and Fidenates, inhabitants of neighbouring states that had been conquered by Romulus, prepared to throw off the yoke, and desert the Roman standard. The Roman and Alban armies met, and a dreadful battle was expected to take place, when a proposal was made by the Alban general to spare the effusion of blood, by referring the question to single combat. Three champions from either army were to be chosen, to whose swords the cause

of their country should be confided. It happened that in each of the hostile camps there was a *trio* of brethren, nearly related to each other, of equal age, and all of whom were celebrated for their courage and skill. The Alban youths were called, the *Curiatii*, and the Roman, the *Horatii*. These were by common consent fixed upon, as the champions of their country's liberty and honour. The combatants were conducted to the lists, amidst the shouts and acclamations of both armies, who were spectators of the contest. The mind sickens at the painful recital, and, instead of dwelling with interest and satisfaction on the circumstances of this inhuman combat, gladly passes over them to observe its issue. After two of the *Horatii* had been killed by their antagonists, and all the three *Curiatii* were wounded, the surviving Roman champion obtained an easy and complete victory, by first separating, and then successively putting to the sword, his feeble adversaries. On his return from the field of battle laden with the spoils, and clad in the armour of his slaughtered foes, he was met by his sister, who had been contracted, and was ardently attached, to one of the *Curiatii*. In an agony of grief at beholding the blood-stained vestments of her lover, she rent her hair, uttered the most piercing cries, and upbraided the conqueror with the murder of her dearest earthly friend. Irritated by her unseasonable grief, and elated with his recent victory, *Horatius*, in a transport of anger, drew his sword, and laid her lifeless at his feet. This disastrous event quickly turned the public joy into mourning, and their admiration of the champion of Rome into detestation of the guilty fratricide. He was apprehended, and delivered to the *Duumviri*, officers appointed to try criminal offences, by whom he was condemned to die. But by the advice of *Tullus Hostilius*, who wished to save his life, though he feared to do it by his sole authority, *Horatius* appealed from the sentence of the *Duumviri* to an assembly of the people, by whom he was finally absolved, in consideration of the eminent services he was supposed to have rendered to his country.

The latter years of the reign of *Hostilius* were occupied with incessant wars, in all of which he was successful.



Alba Longa was dismantled, and its principal inhabitants were carried away. The Veientes and Fidenates were again subjugated by the Roman armies, and the Sabines and Latins who had also revolted, were defeated in several engagements with great loss. After having reigned thirty-two years, Hostilius died, or as some suppose, was assassinated by his people, who were reduced to the utmost distress by a grievous famine.

He was followed in the government of Rome by **ANCUS MARTIUS**, the grandson of Numa Pompilius; whose reign was distinguished by no remarkable occurrences. His principal objects seem to have been,—to restore the institutions of Numa, which had gradually fallen into disuse—to fortify and improve the city by a variety of public and sacred buildings—and to form a sea-port at the mouth of the Tiber, which, by facilitating commerce, rapidly increased the wealth and importance of his flourishing kingdom. Encouraged by the equity of his government, or attracted by the hope of distinction, many strangers came from distant cities to settle at Rome, amongst whom was Lucumo, a wealthy and accomplished foreigner, whose history will be related in the next essay. The death of Ancus Martius, the fourth King of Rome, took place in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and about 135 years after the building of the city.

Plut. in vit. Num. Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 2 et 3. Liv. Hist. Rom. lib. 1. L. Flor. Hist. lib. 1. Aurel. Vict. de vir illust. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

Amongst all the characters celebrated in ancient or modern history, few are to be found that will bear a comparison with Numa Pompilius. Seldom has it been seen that the unostentatious pursuits of literature, or the sacred exercises of religion, have been preferred to the dazzling honours of a crown, and the splendid but peril-

ous duties of a Sovereign! Yet more rare is the example of a prince, who having reluctantly ascended the throne, opposes himself to the torrent of ambition, and, instead of seeking to aggrandize himself by extending his territory, breathes the spirit of peace, and labours to diffuse that spirit amongst his subjects! Yet such a character is Numa represented to have been, whose public and private virtues, growing up as they did beneath the deadly shade of superstition, will hereafter rise up in judgment, and condemn the more enlightened Monarch, whose ambition renders him the scourge of nations, and a curse to mankind. If a heathen ruler exhibited such a self-denying spirit, such a retiring and undissembled modesty, how much rather should those who bear the hallowed name of Jesus, whether of humble or of royal birth, learn of their divine Master to cultivate meekness and lowliness of mind—to exercise self-denial and universal charity—and especially “to follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which none can see the LORD.” Such characters, whatever station they may occupy, cannot fail to prove public blessings; nor can they be strangers to inward felicity, for “the faithful and true witness” has affirmed, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

But though in some respects Numa merited the highest praise, there are others in which he cannot be too severely censured. The charge mentioned by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Romans, applies in part to him, in common with many of the Philosophers and Legislators of antiquity, “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.” They seem in many instances to have been imperfectly, if not fully, acquainted with the doctrines of the Unity and Spirituality of God. They were convinced in their judgments of the folly and absurdity of polytheism. They considered the rites of Paganism, as irrational and unphilosophical, and sometimes represented them in their writings as gross impositions upon the credulity of mankind. Yet they not unfrequently sanctioned all the mummery of superstition by their own example, and concealed from the deluded multitude with the utmost care, the knowledge they had acquired on



these important subjects. Far different was the conduct of the Apostles, and that of the primitive teachers of Christianity. They literally complied with the injunction of their Divine Teacher. What had been told them "in secret, they proclaimed openly; what they had heard in the ear, they published upon the house-tops." They declared "the whole counsel of God" without concealment or reserve, in the temple, the synagogues, the forum, the streets, and every other place of public resort. — They went from city to city, exposing every where the absurdity of Paganism, and preaching, at the hazard of their lives, "Jesus and the resurrection."

The disastrous combat between the three Alban and Roman brethren, is in one respect to be commended, as an expedient for preventing a far greater effusion of human blood; but in another it must be contemplated with abhorrence, as a melancholy instance of the frenzy of ambition, and the miseries in which it frequently plunges its infatuated votaries. When this infernal passion gains the ascendancy, how completely does it blunt the edge of sensibility, freeze the current of the affections, break down the firmest barriers of obligation, and prostrate the fairest fabrics of human happiness! Led on, or rather, furiously impelled by this malignant dæmon, how often does man point a murderous weapon at his fellow-man, and brethren plant their daggers in each other's breasts, whilst innocence and virtue attempt in vain to check these destructive ravages! Nor will this minister of Satan cease to deluge the earth with misery, till the general diffusion of Christian knowledge, and an abundant outpouring of the Spirit of Christ, shall counteract its tremendous evils, and repair the desolations of many generations.

## ESSAY IV.

*On the Government of the TARQUINS.*

FROM A. C. 610—506.

THE fifth of the kings of Rome was Lucius Tarquinius, afterwards called *Priscus* or the elder, to distinguish him from Tarquin the Proud. He was of Grecian extraction, his father having been a merchant of Corinth, who acquired great wealth in that commercial city. But finding it difficult to preserve his substance from the rapacity of Cypselus, who was at that time the tyrant of Corinth, he determined to forsake his native city, and remove to Tarquinii in Etruria. Soon after his settlement in Italy, Lucumo was born, who, in a subsequent period of his life, was better known by the assumed name of Lucius Tarquinius—a name obviously derived, according to the custom of that age, from that of the place of his birth. Arrived at maturity, he formed a matrimonial alliance with Tanaquil, a woman of distinguished rank and boundless ambition, whose artifices prepared the way for his future elevation. By her advice he removed from Tarquinii to Rome, where his wealth and talents were more likely to obtain for their possessor civil and military distinctions, than in Etruria. The expectations of Tanaquil proved well founded, for Tarquin's name was quickly enrolled amongst those of the citizens of Rome, and as the reward of his valour in several engagements with the Veientes and the Latins, he was shortly afterwards made a Patrician and a Senator. This enterprising stranger insinuated himself so completely into the favour and confidence of Ancus Martius, that the latter entrusted to him the sole guardianship of his two sons. But Tarquin, regardless of this sacred trust, and prompted by an insatiable ambition, contrived to secure to himself the suffrages of the people, and obtain the exclusion of the rightful heir to the crown. He effected this most unjust and dis-



honourable purpose by means of bribery, and every other species of corrupt influence, which his ample wealth or imposing eloquence afforded. Having obtained his election, he proceeded to strengthen his interest in the Senate and increase his popularity, by choosing from amongst the Plebeians a hundred of his most zealous partizans, whom he first elevated to the rank of Patricians, and then introduced into the august body of Roman Senators.

From such ambitious beginnings, a tyrannical reign might have been anticipated, but, on the contrary, all ancient historians agree in representing the administration of Tarquin the elder as mild and equitable, tending greatly to augment the power and dignity of Rome. In the former years of his reign, he triumphed successively over the Latins, the Fidenates, the Etruscans, and, at subsequent periods, in a succession of sanguinary battles, he defeated the Sabines, who were the most ancient and formidable enemies of the Roman commonwealth. With the spoils of these conquered tribes, he defrayed the expence of erecting several costly edifices and carrying on public works of great utility. In imitation of his Grecian ancestors, he built a circus for the celebration of public games.\* He enlarged and beautified the forum which Romulus had erected, by surrounding it with porticos and halls, intended for the administration of justice, the education of youth, and the transaction of commercial affairs. This public-spirited prince also surrounded the city with a wall of hewn stone, instead of that which before was built of clay; and constructed those subterraneous channels or sewers for draining and cleansing the city, which Pliny described, after the

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\* The circus built by Tarquin was afterwards distinguished from the rest by the name of *Circus Maximus*. It was of great extent, for it is said to have accommodated 150,000 spectators. In the *arena*, or stage, were exhibited shows of gladiators, wrestlers, and combatants with wild beasts, chariot and foot races, &c. &c. resembling in many respects, but far exceeding in ferocity, the more ancient Grecian games, which are more particularly described in the History of Greece, p. 93.

lapse of many centuries, as still attracting the admiration of the world.\*

When Tarquin had arrived at an advanced age, he undertook the erection of a magnificent and spacious temple, in fulfilment of a vow he had formerly made to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The spot on which he fixed, (and where, with many pompous ceremonies, he laid the foundation of that celebrated structure which was afterwards called the *Capitol*,) was the summit of the Tarpeian hill, which overlooked the greater part of the city. But the execution of this favourite project was suddenly broken off by the death of its founder. A conspiracy, planned by the exiled sons of Ancus Martius, terminated the existence of Tarquin the elder, in the eightieth year of his age and thirty-eighth of his reign.

But the inventive genius of Tanaquil devised means of retaining the government of Rome in her own family, and frustrating the designs of the conspirators. For no sooner had the hoary-headed monarch received a mortal wound from the dagger of an assassin within the walls of his own palace, than she resolved on concealing his death till the administration of public affairs should be transferred to Servius Tullius, a youth of obscure origin, to whom her daughter Tarquinia had been given in marriage. For this purpose a report was circulated, that the

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\* The passage of Pliny now referred to gives such an animated description of these public works, that it claims particular notice. "The *cloacæ*, or sewers, acknowledged to be the most stupendous of all the works of antiquity, were executed by Tarquinius Priscus, who contrived, by undermining and perforating the seven hills on which Rome is built, to make the city hang, as it were, between heaven and earth, and rendered it capable of being sailed under. M. Agrippa, in his Edileship, made seven streams meet together in this subterraneous channel, forming thereby so rapid a current, as to bear down every thing that obstructed its course. Sometimes when swelled with continued rains, this stream strikes with excessive fury against these ancient walls. Yet notwithstanding the conflict which has been maintained for ages with the waters of the Tiber, the frequent passage of fragments of stone or timber, and the pressure of a whole city often affected by earthquakes and other calamities, the works remain entire, and their foundation is unimpaired almost 800 years after their construction.

PLIN. OPER. lib. 33.



king was recovering of his wounds, long after he had actually expired, which so dispirited the sons of Ancus Martius, as to induce them to flee with precipitation from Rome, and leave Servius Tullius in quiet possession of the kingdom.

The reign of this prince was chiefly occupied with political arrangements, tending indeed to consolidate the empire, but also most evidently preparing the way for that revolution which took place in the following reign. He divided the whole number of Roman citizens, (which then amounted to fourscore thousand,) into six *classes*, according to the property they possessed; these were again subdivided into a greater or less number of *centuries*, over each of which a *centurion* of distinguished wisdom or valour presided. A part of each century consisted of those who on account of their age and experience, were left at home in time of war for the defence of the city; but all the rest were liable to be employed in foreign service by a decree of the Senate, or according to the will of the reigning prince. A tax was levied on each century according to the class to which it belonged, by which means each individual contributed towards the exigencies of the state, in exact proportion to the amount of his property. A general *census*, or estimate of the population of the kingdom, was to take place every fifth year, accompanied with sacrifices and other religious rites, which were called *lustrations*. This led to the computation of time amongst the Romans by *Lustra*, or periods of five years, as that of the Greeks had been by Olympiads. Another prominent feature of the policy of Servius Tullius was, to increase the power of the Senate and diminish that of the crown, by devolving on the former some of those functions which had belonged exclusively to the latter; particularly the jurisdiction of all such civil causes, as were not considered capital offences, which alone were deemed worthy of regal interference. By these and many similar regulations, a republican character was given to the commonwealth, even while the forms of royalty were preserved.

After having reigned in peace and with honour upwards of forty-three years, a melancholy catastrophe terminated

the life of this amiable prince—a catastrophe which was brought about by such a complication of enormous crimes, and attended with such circumstances of unheard-of barbarity, that History blushes and shudders, while she records the loathsome facts. It appears that Servius had married his two daughters to the two surviving sons of Tarquin the elder, with the hope of securing to his posterity the undisputed sovereignty of Rome. His younger daughter Tullia, who had been married to Arunx, Tarquin's youngest son, formed a criminal attachment to Lucius Tarquinius, her eldest sister's husband, whose aspiring temper and licentious habits were far more congenial to her wishes and hopes, than the milder and unambitious qualities of her despised husband. Lost to all decency, as well as destitute of every humane sentiment, this monster of depravity did not hesitate to excite her licentious paramour to the execution of a project, which would lead to the immediate possession of the glittering object of their ambition. This was no less than the murder of her father, sister, and husband, preparatory to an incestuous marriage between themselves. Instead of starting back with horror from the infamous proposal, and recoiling with disgust from his infernal tempter, Tarquin entered boldly on the career of iniquity which had been set before him; and having begun with poisoning his wife and brother, concluded with hurling his venerable parent, the hoary-headed monarch, from his throne, whose mangled body was cast out into the streets of the city by the wretched instruments of his barbarity. Tullia hastened to congratulate the usurper on his accession, and in returning, drove her triumphal car over the yet panting remains of her royal father, whose blood is said to have dyed her chariot wheels, and stained her magnificent robes. Such horror was excited by these atrocities, and especially by the barbarity of Tullia, that the street in which the transaction took place, the day on which it was perpetrated, and the very name of the parricide, were branded with perpetual infamy.

The crown which Tarquin had seized thus violently, he felt it necessary to maintain by similar acts of cruelty and oppression. Not daring to refer his cause to the de-



cision of the Senate and people, (though the laws of Rome, and the practice of former times, required that the *Curia Centuriata* should be convened for the election of a King,) he set them at defiance, by collecting a numerous band of mercenaries, to guard his person whenever he appeared in public, and to execute his cruel mandates. The Senators, who refused to become his slaves, were either driven into voluntary exile, or perished in prison; and their confiscated possessions fed his insatiable rapacity. —Nor was his conduct less oppressive to such foreign states as were too weak to resist, or too unsuspicious to guard against his tyranny. A memorable instance has been recorded, which, as it tends to exhibit the true character of the usurper, and the unprincipled despotism of his government, deserves particular notice. The *Gabii*, a small but warlike people in the vicinity of Rome, were excited by many illustrious Romans who had taken refuge within their city, to commence hostilities against a tyrant, who had proved himself to be the common enemy of mankind. Unwilling to risk a battle with these well-disciplined troops, led on by exiled Roman Senators, Tarquin resorted to a stratagem of the most dishonourable, but eventually the most successful kind. He instructed his eldest son Sextus, to speak of him in public as a cruel tyrant, for which supposed offence, the youth was degraded, and, according to some, beaten with rods. Apparently indignant at this treatment, Sextus went over to the *Gabii*, by whom he was cordially welcomed as a valuable auxiliary. The young prince was already so skilful in the arts of dissimulation, as to obtain the entire confidence of the people, and even to be placed at the head of their armies. Having succeeded thus far to the utmost of his wishes, he dispatched a trusty messenger to Rome for further instructions. Tarquin, instead of sending back a written or verbal message, replied by taking the slave into his garden, and striking off the heads of the tallest poppies in his presence. This significant act was well understood by Sextus, when reported to him; and no time was lost in cutting off the wealthiest and most powerful citizens; after which it was easy to deliver up to the tyrant both the city and army, whose unsuspecting confi-

dence had proved the occasion of their ruin. Such an instance of treachery could not fail to render the principal agents, objects of universal detestation, and fully prepared the public mind for the tragical incidents and important results which will be related in the next essay.

Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 3 et 4. Liv. Hist. lib. 1. Plin. lib. 33—36. L. Flor. Aurel. Victor. Eutrop. &c.

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### REFLECTIONS.

Wealth is either good or evil—a blessing or a curse, as it is improved or abused by its possessors. If those whom it has pleased the God of Providence to endow with temporal possessions, have no heart to use them for purposes of piety and beneficence; if they serve but to gratify a vain or feed a covetous mind; if they be solely employed as instruments of pride and ambition—then it is certain that a greater curse cannot befall their possessors, than to be encumbered with such a mass of unsanctified wealth. It was thus that the affluence of Lucumo, or the elder Tarquin, however lawfully and honourably acquired, became an occasion of sin, and a source of national depravation; since it furnished him with means of corrupting the Roman people, and carrying on with success a system of treacherous usurpation.

The violation of a trust so sacred as that of bereaved orphans, under whatever pretence, is properly ranked by all civilized nations amongst the most heinous of crimes. Rarely does it escape, even in the present life, the retributive vengeance of heaven. The attentive and pious observer of the hand of God, will not fail to recognize in the death of the elder Tarquin, a striking example of this retributive vengeance, which, though long delayed and seeming to slumber for many years, at length awoke at the command of the Most High. Wicked men were, it is true, the instruments employed by the Sovereign of the Universe in the execution of vengeance—the deed, as far as its projectors and perpetrators were concerned, was



unlawful and impious—it was deliberate murder; but yet the Righteous Judge of all the earth thus proclaimed the justice of his laws, and the equity of his government. The posterity of Ancus Martius were not only unjustifiable, but exceedingly criminal in resorting to the assassin's dagger for the purpose of recovering their natural and civil rights; for reason as well as revelation teaches, that we ought not to avenge ourselves by rendering evil for evil, much less ought we to attempt to cut off by treachery a treacherous foe. But whilst the unlawfulness of revenge is asserted on authority which can never be controverted, let the equity of the divine government be asserted, who brings down the violent dealings of sinners upon their own heads.

But may not the guardianship of youth be violated in other respects, not less criminal, though less cognizable by human laws, than that of depriving unprotected orphans of their lawful inheritance. If those to whom this charge is confided, neglect their immortal interests, forbear to communicate religious instruction, place them in circumstances of imminent danger, or introduce them to scenes of temptation and moral defilement—if they endeavour to rob them of those virtuous feelings and principles which are better than gold and silver—however sedulously they may watch over their temporal interests, and guard their worldly substance—they must be accounted unfaithful guardians, who have betrayed and plundered those whom they were bound to protect.

The blackest pages and most disgusting records of antiquity will scarcely furnish a parallel to the atrocious crimes of Tullia, and Tarquin the Proud. We shudder to behold one of that amiable and lovely sex which is for the most part characterized by sensibility and delicacy, so brutalized by sensual indulgence, and hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, as thus to riot in iniquity and blood. Yet it is probable that even this monster of iniquity, at the commencement of her criminal career, would have recoiled with horror from the hideous picture of her own enormities; nor would she then have conceived it possible to have attained to so fatal a pre-eminence in guilt, as that which she afterwards acquired. How forcibly does

such an example teach us the progressive nature, and petrifying influence of sin! How distinctly does it represent the danger of entering upon a course of criminal indulgence, by shewing the fearful extremes into which those are likely to be hurried, who resign themselves to the tyranny of their unhallowed passions! Shall it be said that the doctrine of human depravity as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is too deeply tinged, while facts like these are at hand to confirm their representation of the heart, as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”—and of apostate man, as “full of all subtlety and mischief—a child of the devil.”

The dissembling policy of Tarquin, contrasted with the unsuspecting confidence of the Gabii, bears but too strong a resemblance to the artifices of the Father of lies, and the dangerous security of those, who are “led captive by him at his will.” How many are willingly ignorant of his devices; and dreaming away their lives in a false but fatal presumption, suspect no danger, till destruction overtakes them! They listen to the syren-song of worldly pleasure; they pursue the gilded pageants of time; they amuse themselves with the phantoms of the moment; and in the mean time their wily adversary is busily employed in making strong their fetters, in rivetting their chains, and thus completing their ruin.

“ Thus he supports his cruel throne,  
By mischief and deceit;  
And drags the sons of Adam down  
To darkness and the pit!”

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## ESSAY V.

### *The Death of* LUCRETIA.

A. C. 506.

FROM the beginning of the reign of TARQUIN II. (surnamed, *the Proud*,) symptoms of disaffection to his



person and government had occasionally appeared amongst his oppressed subjects. But these were no sooner discovered than suppressed by the strong arm of power, or rather, the iron rod of despotism. Sometimes without the slightest provocation, the usurper would command his mercenaries to seize and massacre the most illustrious of the Romans, whose popularity excited his jealousy, or whose wealth tempted his avarice. At other times, he contrived to divert the public attention from his own atrocities, by the prosecution of those public works which his predecessors had left unfinished, and particularly the Capitol, of which the former Tarquin had laid the foundation. When these projects failed, he had recourse to foreign wars, both as means of enriching his exhausted treasury with the spoils of plundered cities, and of employing for the destruction of others, those energies which he feared would otherwise be directed against himself. To this combination of policy and terror it can alone be ascribed, that this detested tyrant retained possession of an usurped throne twenty-four years, amongst a people distinguished no less by their ardent love of liberty, than by their military prowess.

But the flame which had been so long smothered, at length burst forth with irresistible violence. This conflagration, which consumed, as in a moment, the Roman monarchy, was occasioned by what might at first have appeared but an evanescent spark. The cause and consequences of the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome, and the circumstances leading to the entire subversion of the regal government, after having continued upwards of 240 years, form the subjects of the present essay.

During his war with the Rutuli, Tarquin resolved to lay siege to Ardea, a small but strongly fortified city which was situate about sixteen miles from Rome. As this siege was likely to prove of long continuance, the Roman officers endeavoured to diminish the tediousness of inaction by frequent entertainments. At one of these convivial meetings, the conversation turned upon the excellence of their wives, both as it respected their beauty and virtue. In this commendable rivalry, each one claimed the preference for the object of his choice. Find-

ing it difficult to decide the controversy, it was determined, though the evening was already advanced, to repair to Rome and award the palm to her, who should be found most virtuously and usefully employed. On their arrival, many of the ladies in question were found consuming the night in luxurious conviviality and fashionable dissipation; but Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, who was distantly related to Tarquin, was found in the midst of her domestics, carefully superintending their daily occupations. The modesty of her deportment, united to her personal charms, which were heightened by the conjugal affection that beamed from her eye at the unexpected presence of Collatinus, constrained universal admiration, and obtained from all her visitors the contested palm of virtuous beauty.

But there was a Roman youth present, who contemplated this interesting spectacle with far different emotions—emotions nearly resembling those, with which the Arch-Fiend is represented by our immortal Bard, as gazing at the yet uncontaminated inhabitants of paradise, when

“aside the devil turned  
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign  
Eyed them askance.”

Sextus Tarquinius, who seems to have inherited all his father's vices, was so fascinated and inflamed with the exquisite beauty of Lucretia, and so envious of the conjugal felicity of Collatinus, as from that hour to form the deliberate purpose of gratifying his criminal passion by the violation of her person. An early opportunity of quitting privately the camp was embraced, when Sextus repaired to the unprotected mansion of Collatinus, and was greeted by its fair inhabitant with the cordial hospitality, which she considered as due to a prince, the friend and relation of her absent lord. But her treacherous guest availed himself of the facilities, which conscious rectitude and unsuspecting innocence afforded him, to steal at midnight to her chamber, and with worse than brutal violence to perpetrate his base design. Having accomplished his nefarious purpose, and blasted with his



withering touch one of the fairest flowers that ever expanded in heathen climes, the despoiler hastened back to his deserted tent, at which he arrived before break of day.

Early in the morning Lucretia dispatched messengers to her father and husband, entreating their immediate attendance at her house. In compliance with the urgent summons they had received, Collatinus came from Ardea, bringing with him Junius Brutus, and Spurius Lucretius from Rome, attended by Valerius, (afterwards called Publicola,) and several other friends. They found Lucretia sitting in her chamber, clad in mourning attire, and expressing by her countenance the most inconsolable grief. On inquiring into the cause of that mental anguish which was legibly written on her faded cheek, she related, with mingled tears and blushes, the sad tale of her wrongs, and conjured her friends, by every tender and endearing recollection, to avenge them on the person and family of her brutal ravisher. No sooner had she concluded the sad recital, than suddenly drawing forth a dagger from beneath her robe, she plunged it into her bosom, and almost instantly expired.

In the first moments of alarm and terror, the air was rent with the cries and lamentations of the afflicted relatives of Lucretia, but this tumult of grief quickly subsided, and was followed by a long interval of death-like silence. Mute with horror and distress too big for utterance, they gazed for a time in speechless agony at the melancholy spectacle before them, until at length they were aroused from this lethargy of sorrow by the conduct of Junius Brutus, who threw off, on this memorable occasion, the mask of idiocy he had long worn through fear of the tyrant, and assumed the dignified character of a devoted patriot. Grasping the weapon which was still sheathed in Lucretia's corse, he drew it forth from the streaming wound, and holding it up in the midst of the assembly, solemnly vowed, "by the immortal gods, and by that blood which flowed so pure, till vitiated by Tarquin's lust; that he would pursue the haughty tyrant of Rome, his unnatural wife, and their licentious offspring, with fire and sword, and every other kind of practicable

revenge, till they should be hurled from the pinnacle of usurped authority, and banished from a city which they had grievously oppressed."

The firm and dignified tone with which these words were uttered, astonished beyond measure all who heard them, and led them to contemplate Brutus with veneration, as one who had been suddenly inspired. Animated by his example, and yet more powerfully excited by the last expiring accents of Lucretia—Collatinus, Lucretius, P. Valerius, and all the weeping train of relatives and domestics, bound themselves by the same oath, to avenge her blood by the immediate expulsion of the Tarquins. A guard of youthful patriots was stationed at Collatia, to prevent all communication with the Roman camp, while Brutus and his colleagues hastened to Rome, bearing with them the lifeless remains of the injured Lucretia. They rightly judged that the public exhibition of her body, still weltering in its blood, would avail more than all the powers of rhetoric to incense the Senate and the people against the oppressor. They therefore marched in sad procession through the city to the forum, followed by a great multitude of patricians and plebeians, who were alike eager to learn the particulars of this tragical event.

No sooner were they assembled, than Brutus, in a plain but pathetic oration, explained the cause of his former conduct, recapitulated the cruelties of the Tarquins, and concluded with a narrative of the cause and manner of Lucretia's death. The effect produced by his harangue was equal to the most sanguine wishes of the Roman patriot. The assembly was wrought up to the highest pitch of indignation, and became impatient to enter upon the work of revenge. Before they separated, a decree proposed by Brutus was unanimously confirmed, which enacted 'the immediate abolition of royalty, the expulsion of the Tarquins, and the appointment of two chief magistrates, to be elected annually, who should be called *Consuls*.' The vote of the assembly immediately determined, that the husband of Lucretia, and the patriotic deliverer of Rome, should be the first Consuls of the Roman Republic.



The first act of the new magistrates was to close the gates, and garrison the walls of the city, lest intelligence of the revolution having reached the camp, Tarquin, with his armed legions, should return from Ardea, before sufficient means of defence were provided. In the mean time, Brutus communicated the intelligence of recent transactions to the army, who only waited for the departure of Tarquin at the head of a select band of mercenaries, ere they erected the standard of revolt, or rather threw off the fetters of tyranny. The exiled King, finding, on his arrival at Rome, the gates of his metropolis closed against him, and its walls defended by thousands of zealous patriots; and, on returning to the camp, that a similar spirit of insurrection and hostility pervaded the troops, had no other alternative than to seek some temporary place of refuge, where he might watch for a favourable opportunity of recovering his forfeited crown. He retired with Tullia and two of their children to Cœre, an obscure city of Etruria.

But Sextus, whose profligacy of manners had proved the occasion of the revolution, and involved his whole family in degradation and ruin, most imprudently fled to Gabii, the scene of his former atrocities; where, according to some accounts, he was apprehended, and put to death, by the relatives of those whom he had formerly massacred or betrayed.

Thus terminated the regal government of Rome, after seven kings had occupied the throne, five of whom are supposed to have been cut off by their own subjects. Yet most of these princes were wise, able, and successful, in their administration of public affairs. Their premature end is therefore to be considered rather as indicative of the existing state of society, and proofs of the ferocious manners of the age. It is abundantly evident that, during the continuance of royalty, scarcely any progress was made by the Romans toward that civilization and refinement, for which the Grecian commonwealths were remarkable; and that they still retained much of the fierceness of their original character, preferring for the most part the perilous adventures of war, to the calm

pursuits of literature, or the benefits of extended commerce.

Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 4. c. 64—85. Liv. Hist. lib. 1. ad fin. Luc. Flor. lib. 1. cap. 8—10.



#### REFLECTIONS.

Authority founded in usurpation and supported by violence cannot be permanent. Sooner or later it will fall with its own weight, and involve the disgrace and ruin of those who have fled to it for shelter. Dishonest policy or arbitrary power may indeed appear to succeed; those who are exposed to their malignant influence may be constrained, for a short time, to yield a reluctant submission to the cruel mandates of despotism; but they are weapons that cannot ultimately prosper; they will ultimately be found to pierce the hand that wields them, and the side that leans upon them for support. This must be obvious to all who have attentively observed the ordinary course of human affairs, whether in connection with empires and public men, or with relation to the private concerns of individuals. But especially is this practical lesson inscribed upon the history of the Tarquins, whose iniquitous elevation to an usurped throne, was quickly followed by a sudden and calamitous reverse, which distinctly proclaimed, “the triumphing of the wicked is short.”

What a train of important consequences followed the apparently fortuitous conversation of the Roman officers in the camp at Ardea. Trifling as that incident might appear at the moment, it was fraught with the future destinies of Rome and of the world. Credulous infidelity may overlook the Sovereign of the Universe in all these events, and ascribe this whole train of causes and effects to mere accident; but Piety will ever confess with devout adoration, that He who seeth the end from the beginning, who causeth even the wrath of man to praise him, and is



able to bring good out of evil,—*He* it is who “worketh all these things after the counsel of his own will.” “He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

What could be expected to result from the criminal alliance of Tarquin and Tullia, but such a poisonous death-dispensing plant as Sextus proved himself to be? What but such a combination of treachery and sensuality, dissimulation and cruelty, as formed his character, could be anticipated from the principles of his education, the vicious example of his parents, and the scenes of violence and oppression with which he had been familiar from his childhood? Scarcely can we wonder that this profligate youth should, in future life, derive his chief gratification from sensual indulgences and criminal pleasures; that he should be alike insensible to all the charms of modest beauty and all the chaste endearments of virtuous love; that he should delight alone in marring the happiness of which he could not taste, and triumphing by brutal violence over the innocence, which he was unable by all his artifices to corrupt. Would to God that such flagrant vices had ever sheltered themselves amidst the lurid gloom of Superstition—but alas! how often have they stalked abroad with unblushing countenance in the hallowed precincts of the Christian temple, and amidst the noon-day blaze of Revelation! How often have the children of Christian parents, who were blest with the instructions, the prayers, and the example of ancestors eminent for piety and holiness, grown up the slaves of passion, emulating the vices, and, if it were possible, even exceeding the crimes of Sextus Tarquinius. Surely it will be more tolerable for the *Tarquins* and *Tullias* of antiquity, (conspicuous as they rendered themselves by their profligacy, even in a degenerate age,) in the day of vengeance, than for those who having “known the way of righteousness, turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”

Who can refuse a tear to the memory of the lovely but unfortunate Lucretia? Is there a breast so cold, a heart so destitute of feeling, as to be indifferent to the tender anguish of a mind thus delicately chaste, whose moral susceptibility recoiled with horror and disgust

from the touch even of involuntary defilement? But let us beware, lest our admiration of her virtuous qualities, our sympathy in her sufferings, and our indignation at her wrongs, should render us indifferent to those anti-christian sentiments of revenge, which she felt and expressed in her last moments, and that false heroism which prompted her to the sin of suicide. Justice however requires us to add, that both revenge and suicide were not only tolerated, but applauded by heathen moralists, who, in this, as well as in many other instances, called "good, evil; and evil, good." But, whatever may have been the sentiments of the most enlightened Pagans on this subject, Christianity condemns both these practices: it teaches us not to curse, but to bless and pray for our worst enemies; and it demonstrates that the rash mortal, who, whether prompted by false notions of honour, or impelled by the phrenzy of despair, rushes unsummoned into the presence of his Judge, is a murderer, whose blood calls for vengeance, and whose guilt shall not go unpunished.

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## ESSAY VI.

*On JUNIUS BRUTUS and VALERIUS PUBLICOLA.*

*Brutus died, A. C. 506. Publicola, 501.*

THE patriotic Romans, whose names are prefixed to the present essay, were unquestionably the most illustrious men of their times. They possessed indeed different, and in some respects, opposite qualities; yet they were most zealously attached to one grand object; they laboured strenuously in one common cause;—they devoted all their energies both of body and mind to one arduous undertaking. To obtain and preserve the liberties of Rome, was the object which lay nearest to their hearts, though pursued in different ways. The patriotism of Brutus was austere and inflexible, uniformly charac-



terized by that stern and stoical firmness, which has been dignified with the name of *Roman virtue*; but that of Valerius was mild and conciliatory, ever ready to sacrifice private to public good, from motives of benevolence, as well as of justice. The former inspired veneration—the latter, affection. Both these distinguished patriots acted a conspicuous part in the revolution that followed the death of Lucretia; and indeed all the transactions of their lives are so completely identified with the origin and progress of the Roman republic, that a memoir of the former, must include a history of the latter. On this account it will not be considered foreign to the professed design of this work, to collect, from various sources, the principal facts which have been preserved by tradition, or recorded in authentic history, relative to the private and public life of these distinguished individuals.

Junius Brutus was the son of M. Junius, a senator of high distinction and ample possessions, who is said to have descended in a direct line from one of the Trojan exiles. The wealth, the talents, the popularity of this venerable Patrician, and, above all, his alliance by marriage to the elder Tarquin, conspired to render him an object of jealousy and hatred to the degenerate son and successor of that prince, the commencement of whose sanguinary reign was rendered infamous by the assassination of Junius and his elder son, and the seizure of their ancient family inheritance. Junius Brutus, the younger and only remaining branch of the family, was spared, not from compassion, (for to that sentiment, the tyrant was a stranger,) but because of his extreme youth and apparent fatuity. So successful was Brutus in counterfeiting idiocy, and so little was the artifice suspected, that he was received into the palace, and brought up amongst the children of the usurper, for their amusement. Ancient tradition has preserved a characteristic anecdote relative to this period of his life, which tends to evince the penetrative genius, that lay concealed beneath this garb of supposed intellectual weakness. When, on a certain occasion, the city was ravaged by a mortal disease, Tarquin sent Aruns and Titus, two of his younger

sons, to consult the Delphic oracle on the most effectual means of appeasing the wrath of Apollo. Brutus accompanied them, and, when the young princes offered their costly gifts, presented what appeared to be an oaken staff, but was in reality a golden rod cased over with wood. Ambition prompted the sons of Tarquin to inquire before they left Delphos, "which of them should reign in Rome." The reply was, "he that on returning home shall first salute his mother." The princes interpreted this response of the oracle literally, but Brutus figuratively, and therefore, on reaching the Italian coast, he fell, as by accident, and saluted his mother Earth. Such was the dissembling part which Brutus continued to act for many years, carefully concealing within his breast the indignation he felt at his private wrongs, and the calamities of his country. At length the favourable moment arrived, when prudence permitted him to unmask and present himself to his fellow-citizens in the character of an avenger of injured innocence, and the deliverer of an oppressed people.

It has been already stated, that the important charge of organizing and governing the new Republic, was confided to Brutus and Collatinus. In pursuance of this object, the Consuls called an assembly of the people, and with the usual sacrifices and lustrations, both took and administered a civic oath, by which they bound themselves and their fellow-citizens, not only to exclude Tarquin and his family for ever, but also to suffer no king to reign in Rome. After some regulations of minor importance were adopted, the assembly broke up in perfect harmony. But it soon appeared that this unanimity was rather apparent than real, and that the royal exile had still a considerable party within the city. This party was chiefly composed of young men of distinction, who were pleased with the luxuries and voluptuousness of the court of Tarquin, and had been formed to dissolute habits by the society and example of his profligate children. Ambassadors were sent from Etruria to Rome, ostensibly to solicit the restitution of Tarquin's effects, but in reality to ascertain the numbers and confirm the hopes of the mal-contents. The Senate decreed, in op-



position to the judgment of Brutus, who remonstrated against the measure, and in compliance with that of his more amiable colleague, 'that Tarquin's effects should be sold, and their value remitted to him by the Etruscan ambassadors.' Under pretence of superintending the disposal of these effects, the emissaries of Tarquin prolonged their stay from month to month, during which period they held frequent meetings, and carried on a secret correspondence with the conspirators. But notwithstanding all the precautionary measures adopted by the disaffected party to conceal the place, time, and object of their meeting, they were at length detected by Vindicius, a slave belonging to the Aquilii, at whose house the conspirators assembled. When Vindicius discovered that amongst the mal-contents, were the two sons of Brutus, and several nephews of Collatinus, he feared to disclose the secret to the Consuls, lest natural affection should induce them to connive at the treasonable practices of their relatives. He therefore resolved to make the important discovery to Valerius, whose house was ever open to the poorest of his fellow-citizens, and by whom the most prompt and decided measures were taken to secure the traitors, and seize upon their papers. These documents were found abundantly to confirm the evidence of Vindicius, and substantiate the guilt of the prisoners.

Early in the morning a general assembly was convened; the Consuls ascended the tribunal of justice; the prisoners were brought before them in chains; and Titus and Tiberius, the sons of Brutus, were first arraigned. After Vindicius had been publicly examined, and the treasonable letters which had been intercepted were read, these youths were thrice called upon by Brutus for their defence, but they replied only with their tears. The whole assembly melted at the sight; some of the Senators indistinctly murmured, "Banish them;" Collatinus wept aloud; and Valerius, though silent, seemed by his supplicatory looks to plead for the deluded youths. But Brutus remained inflexible. With a firm and dignified tone he commanded the lictors to perform their office, and he himself looked on with an unmoved coun-

tenance, while the criminals, according to the Roman custom, were stripped, scourged with rods, and beheaded. Having calmly witnessed this bloody spectacle, he retired from the hall of justice, leaving it to his colleague to try the rest of the prisoners.

Collatinus had too tender and susceptible a heart to imitate the rigorous example which had been set him. He was easily induced by the entreaties of his nephews, and the intercessions of his sister, who pleaded with all a mother's earnestness for her traitorous offspring, to suspend the sentence, and afford them time to prepare their defence. This lenity, which appeared to Brutus impolitic and dangerous to the liberties of Rome, so completely alienated that stern patriot from his more amiable colleague, that the latter deemed it prudent to abdicate the consulship, and retire into voluntary exile.

P. Valerius succeeded him in the consulate, who concurred with Brutus in the harsh but prudential measures of executing all the remaining conspirators, sending home the Etruscan ambassadors in disgrace, and reversing the decree which had been passed in favour of the Tarquins. Frantic with rage and disappointment, the dethroned tyrant stirred up the states of Etruria to espouse his cause, and entrust him with a numerous army. As soon as he invaded the Roman frontiers, the Consuls collected all the military forces of the republic, and marched to grapple with this furious adversary. Both parties were eager for the contest, the one prompted by ambition, and a desire of revenge; the other determined to maintain at any price, their newly-acquired liberties. Early in the engagement Brutus, and Aruns the son of Tarquin, met, and rushed on each other with such fury, that both fell from their horses at the same moment, pierced to the heart by each other's spears. But notwithstanding the loss of one of their generals, and the desperate valour of the invading army, the Romans, led on by Valerius, renewed the charge, and at length obtained a decided victory. The surviving Consul was honoured with a splendid triumph, and the departed hero with a pompous funeral. On this occasion, Valerius delivered an eloquent oration, in which he eulogized



the talents and virtues of his lamented colleague, pronouncing him “the second founder of Rome, who had encountered much greater dangers and hardships in restoring and preserving its fallen liberties, than Romulus, in laying its first foundations.” This seems to have been the most ancient example of a practice which afterwards became general both in Greece and Rome, and was found to have no inconsiderable influence upon the public mind. Amongst other honours paid to the memory of Brutus, the Roman matrons expressed their veneration and gratitude by mourning for him twelve months.

As Valerius was left by the death of Brutus the sole magistrate of Rome, and did not immediately summon the *comitia* for the election of a new Consul, the people became suspicious of him, and listened to the insinuations of his adversaries, who accused him of aiming at the subversion of the republic. They were confirmed in these suspicions by his having lately erected a superb mansion upon an eminence which commanded the forum, and which their jealous fears converted into a fortress built for the re-establishment of tyranny. But no sooner was the Consul informed of these prejudices, than he adopted the most effectual means of removing the jealousies of his fellow-citizens, and inspiring them with an unlimited confidence in his government. He caused his splendid residence, which had been erected at a great expence, and was so situated as to be highly ornamental to the city, to be rased to the ground. He enacted several laws tending to abridge the power of the Consul, and increase that of the people; and concluded with convening a general assembly for the election of a new Consul. The choice fell upon Sp. Lucretius, who did not long survive his election, and was succeeded by Horatius Pulvillus. The public measures of Valerius were so grateful to the people, that he was chosen to the consulate three years successively, and obtained by common consent the name of *Publicola*, or “*Friend of the People*.” In his third consulship, the Roman territories were again invaded at the instigation of Tarquin, by Porsena, king of the Clusians. This invasion is rendered memorable

by several incidents which tend to shew the national character, as well as personal intrepidity of the Romans. In one of the engagements with Porsena which took place under the walls of Rome, when the Roman army was completely routed, and fled precipitately into the city, the pursuing enemy was checked by a Roman soldier, named Horatius Cocles; who, planting himself in the narrow pass leading to the bridge, defended it against a host of enemies, till the bridge was broken down in his rear, and then plunging into the Tiber, swam safely amidst showers of darts to the opposite bank. His valour and patriotism were signally rewarded by private donations and public honours.

Soon after this incredible exploit, another Roman soldier, named Mucius Cordus Scævola, having obtained leave to quit the camp on a secret enterprise of great importance, by means of an Etruscan disguise, penetrated to the tent of Porsena, and stabbed an officer of state, whom he mistook for the king. Being seized by the guards before he could effect his escape, he was brought before Porsena, who interrogated and threatened him with the severest tortures. Scævola firmly replied to the king's inquiries, "that he was a Roman who came thither to deliver his country from her worst foe; but, having failed in his object, he was now prepared to suffer all that that enemy could inflict." Whilst uttering these words, he thrust his right hand into a flame which was burning upon an adjacent altar, to prove that he was fearless of danger, and superior to the most excruciating pains. Porsena, astonished at his intrepidity, not only dismissed him honourably, but seemed from that moment to entertain a generous esteem for his adversaries. An act of treachery which Tarquin committed soon afterwards, in violently seizing upon some unprotected Roman females, who were sent as hostages to the camp of Porsena, so disgusted and offended that prince, as to induce him to desert the cause of the exiled tyrant, and enter into alliance with the Romans. This amiable monarch displayed his generosity by leaving behind him all the provisions of his camp for the supply of the famished inhabitants of Rome; and they, in their turn, evinced



their gratitude and esteem, by presenting their new ally with an ivory throne, a golden crown and sceptre, and a triumphal robe, besides erecting his statue in the most public place of resort.

Soon after this treaty of peace was concluded, Publicola entered upon his fourth consulate, but did not live to complete it. After having triumphed a second time, on account of his victories over the Fidenates and capture of their city, he died highly honoured and universally lamented. Though he had been so successful in war, as frequently to have collected great spoil, and had held the highest offices in the Republic, so far from having enriched either himself or his family, he was found so poor at his death, that his remaining property would not defray the charges of his funeral; and therefore from necessity, as well as in honour to his memory, he was interred at the public expence.

“He was lamented,” says his celebrated biographer, “not only by friends and relations, but by the whole city. Thousands attended his funeral with tears of unfeigned regret, and exhibited signs of the deepest sorrow. The Roman matrons especially, mourned for him as for the loss of a son, a brother, or a common parent.”

Dionys. Halic. lib. 5. Liv. Hist. lib. 2. Plut. in vit. Publicol.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

As we have been contemplating a character, whose history furnishes the earliest example of that austere morality, which has been denominated *Roman*, (on account of its having been admired and practised by many distinguished leaders of that Republic,) it becomes necessary to analyze this boasted virtue, and endeavour to estimate its value by Christian principles.

It is readily admitted, that as far as the conduct of Brutus, or any other of these models of *Roman* virtue, evinced that strength of mind and decision of character, which qualified their possessors for great sacrifices and

heroic deeds—which elevated the claims of justice and virtue above the susceptibilities and sympathies of nature—and which demonstrates a high tone of moral feeling—it was highly commendable. But as far as it exhibited a proud and stoical insensibility of mind—a worse than brutal apathy—it cannot be too severely condemned. Is there any thing in the volume of Revelation that sanctions this prostration of private feeling, this sacrifice of natural affection, this total annihilation of the tenderest sympathies of the human heart—those sympathies which have been implanted there by the Great Author of our Being for the most benevolent purposes, and which are found to produce the happiest moral effects? Does the Gospel of Christ require us to restrain the emotions of pity, tenderness, and mercy towards our offending fellow-creatures? Does it represent the exercise of the milder graces, such as love, meekness, forbearance, and benignity, as incompatible with that regard to justice and integrity, or that detestation of vice, which we are commanded to cherish? Does that divine Word which teaches us to do justly, forbid us to love mercy? If not, why should that cold and severe morality, which demanded and applauded these painful sacrifices, be eulogized by professed Christians, as nearly approaching to perfection?

But perhaps if we examine more closely this quality, falsely called virtue, we shall find that it originated in pride, and was fostered by that very selfishness, which it appeared to renounce. Is it uncharitable to affirm, that there was probably no moment in the life of Brutus in which he was more elated with a proud consciousness of superiority to ordinary men, than that in which he triumphed so completely over his parental feelings, as calmly to contemplate the dying agonies of his two sons? Then it was that he applauded his own heroism, in rising above those weak and feminine emotions, which parents usually feel, and fancied himself placed on the loftiest pinnacle of Fame. Till therefore pride and selfishness, vain-glory and hardness of heart, become virtues, this unlovely quality, which was but a wretched compound of them all, ought not to be so denominated.



Patriotism and public justice, virtues for which Brutus has been most celebrated, will ever be found to flourish most in a Christian soil. For assuredly nothing tends more to inspire an ardent love of our country, and to call forth the most vigorous efforts in its defence, than undissembled piety. Nor can any thing furnish so powerful motives to execute judgment and justice, and to maintain truth and uprightness, as those which may be drawn from the Holy Scriptures. But they do not accomplish this, by transforming men into monsters: in effecting these objects, the sympathies of our nature are not destroyed, but on the contrary, quickened, elevated and refined. Let it be remembered that the same authority, which commands us to “deny ourselves,” to “crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts;” to “cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, if they be evil;” and, if necessary, to “forsake father or mother, sister or brother, for Christ’s sake, and the Gospel’s,”—requires also that we “weep with those that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice”—that we be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us—and finally, exhorts us to ask of God that wisdom which is “pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.”

Brutus was highly honoured and almost idolized by his countrymen, on account of his generous exertions in behalf of an oppressed people—and shall not much rather the Saviour of mankind, the Redeemer of a perishing world, be venerated and adored

“In every land, by every tongue.”

For the Roman patriot was prompted partly by the desire of revenge, and partly by the hope of fame; in rescuing others from the grasp of a cruel tyrant, he effected at the same time his own deliverance; and, after all, the boon which he procured for his country, was of comparatively short duration, and held on a most precarious tenure. But the Son of God was prompted alone by pure, disinterested love, when he made his soul an offering for sin. As he is “over all God blessed for

ever," it could not be necessary that he should work out redemption for himself; but it was for apostate creatures—guilty rebels—inveterate foes, he devoted himself to death, "even the death of the cross." The precious boon he purchased with his blood was eternal life, to as many as believe on his name, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." What blessing and honour and glory and power are due to Him, who was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood, "out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation!"

The inflexible justice of the *Roman Father* in not sparing the lives of his traitorous children when forfeited by their crimes; and the honour done by him to the Roman law, which had been just enacted, and whose severest penalty they had incurred, may also serve to remind us of the mingled "severity" and grace of the ETERNAL FATHER, who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; though that Son was his equal—his well-beloved Son; and though he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." By doing this he has displayed both his justice and grace; he has "magnified his law, and made it honourable."

What costly sacrifices did Publicola make to obtain the favour of a fickle, capricious multitude! Shall not we much rather be willing to sacrifice our ease, our pleasures, our substance, our friends, yea, and our lives also, if conscience and duty demand them, that we may enjoy the perpetual favour and unchanging love of God? Ought it not to cover us with shame, that the mere love of popularity should have been frequently found to produce greater acts of self-denial and voluntary abasement, than we are willing to perform from love to God and regard to his authority? Nor must we omit to remark, that the conduct of Porsena towards his Roman adversaries affords an example of forbearance and generosity to enemies, which is worthy of imitation. It afforded a practical illustration of the divine precept, which has commanded, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;—for in so doing thou



shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

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## ESSAY VII.

*On the circumstances which led to the appointment of a  
DICTATOR and TRIBUNES of the People.*

*First Dictator created, A. C. 496.*

*First Tribunes . . . . . A. C. 492.*

SCARCELY had the public lamentations for Valerius ceased, when fierce contentions arose between the Patricians and Plebeians, which threatened the very existence of the Republic. As these disputes continued to rage with a greater or less degree of violence, for several centuries, and were productive of the most important changes in the commonwealth, it is requisite to inquire into their nature, and endeavour to trace them to their source. In proportion as the authority of the Senate became firmly established, the Patricians displayed an ambitious, haughty, and oppressive disposition. Elated with the influence they had acquired in the state by reserving to themselves all civil and military dignities, and greatly enriched by the spoils of war, they cherished the spirit of Tyranny, under the hallowed names of Patriotism and Liberty, and treated with the utmost rigour their necessitous fellow-citizens. For the same wars which had augmented the wealth of the patricians, had reduced to penury and distress multitudes of the plebeians, by suspending those agricultural pursuits, on which they depended for their subsistence. Their urgent necessities had obliged almost the whole mass of the Roman commonalty to contract debts with their opulent patrons; and, by the laws of Rome at that time, debtors were placed almost entirely at the mercy of their creditors. They were whipped, tortured, imprisoned, or even

reduced to the condition of slaves, according to the will of their new sovereigns. Thus Rome became divided into two parties, with totally opposite feelings and interests—the one, an opulent, and consequently powerful aristocracy, by whom all the offices, honours, and wealth of the republic were monopolized—the other, a dependent, because necessitous commonalty, who were sunk into the contrary extreme of want and misery, yet extremely jealous of their liberties, and conscious of the commanding influence they possessed in the state, whenever they chose to exert it. It was easy to perceive that, in such a state of society, tranquillity could not long be preserved; and not a few of the more popular Senators, who had frequently remonstrated against such arbitrary measures, justly apprehended a speedy and general revolt.

It soon became evident that these apprehensions were but too well founded. An occasion presented itself, which was eagerly seized by the disaffected plebeians, both of uttering their complaints, and urging their claims. Towards the end of the consulate of T. Largius and Q. Clœlius, the deposed King of Rome, encouraged by the intelligence he had received of the existing differences between the Senate and people, renewed his efforts to regain the crown. He formed a powerful confederacy, consisting of thirty Latin cities, besides the Hernici and Volsci, whom he prevailed upon to invade the territories of Rome. This formidable league alarmed the Consuls so much the more, as it was unexpected, and as they felt themselves ill prepared for defence. They called upon the *centuries* immediately to enrol themselves, and take the customary oaths; but they refused with one accord to take up arms, alledging, that “it became those who enjoyed all the honours and benefits of the commonwealth to defend it, but, for themselves, they would no longer serve such cruel masters.” Threats and remonstrances, entreaties and promises were alike fruitless; the people obstinately persisted in their refusal to obey the consular edict. Concessions served only to augment the violence, and heighten the demands of the mutinous plebeians; who now insisted on the immediate abolition of all debts,



and the repeal of all the obnoxious statutes, upon which their principal grievances were founded. Some of the Senators contended strenuously for an immediate compliance with these proposals, but the majority followed the opinion of Appius Claudius, an haughty and ambitious patrician, who advised to reject the claims, and chastise the insolence of the insurgents.

The exigency of the times called for some extraordinary expedient, and such was the expedient adopted on this occasion. It was resolved to entrust all the concerns of the Republic for six months to one supreme magistrate, who should be possessed of absolute power, whose authority should supersede that of the Consuls and of the Senate, and who should be responsible to no one, either during the administration, or after the fulfilment of his office. This magistrate, who was called a *Dictator*, was nominated by the elder of the Consuls at midnight; he was attended on all occasions by twenty-four lictors, armed with fasces; and was authorized to inflict summary punishment on every offender. Strange as it may appear, no sooner was this decree of the Senate proposed to an assembly of the people for their assent, than they acceded to it; and as soon as T. Largius, one of the Consuls for that year, was nominated the first Dictator, all classes of the citizens flocked to his standard. This magistrate soon found himself at the head of 150,000 warriors, whom he divided into four armies; one of which he commanded in person; the second was entrusted to Sp. Cassius, whom he had previously appointed General of the Horse; the third, to his late consular colleague, Q. Clœlius; and the fourth was stationed in the city for its defence, and placed under the command of his brother. These formidable preparations so terrified the Latins, that they proposed an immediate suspension of hostilities, and hastily returned home, to make preparations for a more vigorous assault, which they meditated early in the following year.

Agreeably to this intention, they entered the Roman territories with augmented forces, and a tremendous battle was fought near the lake Regillus, which ended in the total overthrow of the invading army, fifty thousand

of whom are said to have perished. Three sons of Tarquin, after having performed prodigies of valour, were found amongst the slain. This was the last despairing struggle of that ambitious prince; for on receiving intelligence of the disastrous issue of this battle, he retired to Campania, where he died in the 90th year of his age.

The death of Tarquin, and consequent termination of the war, removed the fears of the patricians, and encouraged them to renew their former cruelties.—Regardless of the promises they had made in the moment of alarm, they now adopted more arbitrary measures, and recommenced prosecutions for debt, imprisonments, and every species of torture, with greater severity. They were instigated to these violent proceedings by Appius Claudius, who was now elected Consul, as the senator whose inflexible temper was best fitted to contend with a disaffected populace, and reduce them to subjection. But lest the impetuosity of his character should lead him to dangerous extremes, they prudently associated with him in the consulship, P. Servilius, a senator of mild and amiable manners, who was greatly beloved by the people. His influence was so great, as not only to restrain for a time the violence of popular feeling, but even to prevail upon them once more to enlist, and follow his standard, when he went to repulse the Volsci, who had suddenly made an irruption into the Roman territories. Soon after the army had returned, laden with the spoils of victory, an apparently trifling incident caused the secret discontents of the people to break out into open revolt. An aged Roman soldier, who had once possessed considerable property, but had lost the whole, and become impoverished by the calamities of war,—whose valour had been often tried in the field, and frequently excited admiration,—was observed on a certain day to enter the forum, bending under the weight of his chains, in tattered garments, his back lacerated and bleeding with the recent scourge—the only rewards received in return for the eminent services he had rendered to his country. His very appearance awakened the sympathies of the assembly, many of whom were well acquainted



with his military prowess; but much more were they excited to compassion, when he related the affecting narrative of his sufferings, and the unparalleled cruelty of his creditors. Scarcely had he concluded his pathetic appeal to the sympathies of his fellow-citizens, ere the infuriated multitude rushed out of the forum, uttering execrations against the whole body of patricians, and especially resolved to make Appius Claudius the first victim of their revenge.

Tidings of the intention of the populace reached Appius in sufficient time to enable him to effect his escape. But Servilius, relying upon his popularity, threw off his consular robe, and laying aside the insignia of office, ran into the midst of the crowd. He used every form of entreaty and persuasion to induce his fellow-citizens to refrain from violence, promising that their demands should be fully satisfied, and thus at length succeeded in restoring tranquillity. The public attention was for a short time diverted from these intestine broils, by a second and more formidable irruption of the Volsci, who were met and defeated with great loss by the Romans under Servilius. Yet though the victory was complete, Appius Claudius prevailed upon the Senate to refuse his colleague, the customary honours of a triumph; an honour which he afterwards obtained, in defiance of the Senate, by appealing to an assembly of the people.

In the following year, M. Valerius, brother to Publiola, was appointed *Dictator*, for the purpose of conducting hostilities against the Sabines and Volsci, who had again declared war. The popularity of the Valerian family rendered it not difficult for the Dictator to raise a numerous army, notwithstanding the disaffection of the people to their rulers. Convinced that the lower orders of the people were grievously oppressed, he pledged himself to redress their wrongs; but finding it impracticable to redeem his pledge, he resigned his office before the usual term had expired, and whilst the Roman legions were yet in the field. Thus deserted by a magistrate, to whom they had looked up with confidence, and deceived in their expectations of speedy redress, the soldiers

determined to retire to a place called *the Sacred Mount*, about three miles distant from Rome, where they formed an intrenched camp. They were quickly joined by multitudes of slaves and seditious plebeians from the city, which was soon almost deserted by all who were not of patrician rank. Yet though Rome was thus unprotected, her armed citizens were too deeply impressed with the sacred obligation of their military oath, and too warmly attached to their country, to think of turning their arms against the Senators and Patricians. They were satisfied with seceding, till their claims should be granted, and their future liberties secured. In order that their proceedings might be under some regulation, they chose two leaders, of a bold and decided character, and eloquent address, named *Sicinius Bellutus*, and *Junius*, the latter of whom assumed the name of Brutus, though he was of a different family.

This revolt, as it necessarily led to a total suspension of all agricultural and commercial occupations, became daily more alarming in its consequences. Firm as were the patricians, they were at length compelled to propose terms of accommodation. Repeated deputations were sent to the seceders, and the fairest promises made, on condition of their return to their allegiance. In one of these embassies, Menenius Agrippa pronounced his celebrated fable of the rebellion of the members of the human body against the stomach, which produced so powerful an effect, that the mutineers would have immediately returned to Rome, but for their leaders, who warned them against unconditionally surrendering themselves to their oppressors. They therefore required not only that an edict of the Senate should abolish all debts, and liberate those who had been imprisoned or enslaved on this account, but also that they should assent to the appointment of a new order of magistrates annually chosen from amongst the plebeians, whose exclusive office it should be, to watch the proceedings of the Senate, and disannul by their simple *veto* all those decrees, which they considered arbitrary or unjust. These magistrates were to be called *Tribunes of the People*; a law was passed, rendering the persons of the Tribunes sacred,



and constituting it a capital offence to use any violence towards them.

The Senate reluctantly yielded to these proposals, and Tribunes were immediately chosen. Sicinius and Junius were first elected, but the number was soon increased to five, and afterwards to ten, at which it remained stationary. After these negotiations were concluded, the soldiers and citizens returned to Rome; but in order to preserve the memory of their *secession*, and of the advantages resulting from it to distant ages, it was determined to consecrate the *Sacred Mount*, and erect upon it a temple, dedicated to *Jupiter the Terrible*.

Dionys. Antiq. Rom. lib. 5 et 6. Liv. Hist. Rom. lib. 2 et 3.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

It is not necessary to appeal to ancient records for proof that the rapid accumulation of wealth, or the sudden acquisition of power, usually tends to indurate the mind. How frequently has it been observed that those who were comparatively kind, benevolent, and even liberal, when in circumstances of mediocrity, are no sooner possessed of great wealth than their hearts become hardened, and their habits churlish? How often have those, who, in common life, were amiable, respectable, and useful, when suddenly elevated to rank and power, become tyrannical and imperious, the pests and curses of society? Such indeed is the weakness of the human mind, that it is as little capable of bearing these sudden transitions in outward circumstances, without serious injury, as the human body is incapable of passing at once from the extremes of cold and heat, famine and abundance. It can therefore excite no surprise, that the Roman patricians, when freed from the salutary restraint of a temperate monarchy, or emancipated from the yoke of a cruel tyrant, and suddenly invested with supreme authority, should be so intoxicated with the inebriating draught of power, as to be transformed from

the respected *Fathers* of the people to their tyrannical oppressors.

It has been wisely ordained by the Sovereign of the Universe, that a difference of rank and station should exist amongst mankind in all ages and countries. The division of society into higher and subordinate classes is doubtless intended to afford, both to rich and poor, an opportunity of exercising those social virtues, and discharging those reciprocal duties, which could not otherwise be reduced to action. So long as these distinctions remain, the opulent will not be exempt from obligations to beneficence, liberality, sympathy, and condescension; nor will the indigent be freed from the duty of exhibiting a grateful temper, respectful deportment, and submissive conduct towards their superiors. But this appointment of Providence forms no excuse for human injustice. Because there is reason to suppose that "the poor will never cease out of the land;" man is not justified in preying upon his fellow man, and reducing him by arbitrary and unjust measures to indigent circumstances; much less is he at liberty to elevate himself, by treading his neighbour in the dust.

The impolicy of such attempts sufficiently appears from the preceding facts, which manifestly prove that they are incompatible with the peace of society, and will sooner or later recoil upon those who practise them. But there are much higher and stronger motives by which the duties of liberality and kindness to the poor may be enforced. "To the word and to the testimony," we are instructed in all cases to make our appeal, nor shall we appeal in vain. In the Divine Code, which Moses delivered to the tribes of Israel, the care of the Divine Legislator for the poor was distinctly to be traced, in the prohibitions of usury, the exhortations to beneficence, and the merciful institutions, with which it abounded. If a brother, or even a stranger and sojourner had become poor, and fallen into decay, his wealthier neighbours were forbidden to take usury of him, or to lend him food for gain, or to reduce him to slavery; but, on the contrary, they were commanded to treat him with kindness, and relieve his necessities, even though the year



were at hand, in which, according to the Jewish law, the debtor would be released from all obligation to his creditors. (See Lev. xxv. 25. to the end; and also Deut. xv. 1—15.) The prophets were frequently commanded to reprove the rulers of Israel and Judah for their sin in “grinding the faces of the poor, and grievously oppressing the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger, within their gates.” (Consult particularly, Isa. iii. 14, 15. and lviii. 3—7. Ezek. xviii. 7, 8, 12 and 13. Amos. iv. 1. Zech. vii. 9—12.) But the Gospel Dispensation, which breathes throughout the benignant spirit of its founder, lays a yet greater stress upon this important branch of moral obligation. For not only does it forbid the professed disciples of Christ to defraud one another; not only does it commend their poor to the special and constant care of the church; but it even proposes this as a test of Christianity; “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” 1st John iii. 17. See also Matt. xxv. 31. to the end.

There are however duties of the poor toward the rich, as well as of the rich toward the poor. There was no excuse on the principles of *heathen*, and much less of *Christian* morality, for the turbulence, the insubordination, the rebellion of the Roman populace. The “law written upon their hearts” would have told them, had they consulted it, that to *suffer* was better than to *do* wrong; and that it rather became them “to endure grief, suffering wrongfully,” than by avenging themselves, to break asunder the bonds of peace, and to violate social order. But how much more should the meekness and gentleness of Christ constrain his followers to exercise patience under injuries, from a regard to his example, who, “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”

## ESSAY VIII.

On CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.

FLOURISHED A. C. 486.

THE year in which Tribunes of the People were first chosen forms an important epoch in Roman History, because the Republic assumed from that time a new character, and from being a limited aristocracy, became a tumultuous popular government. Small as the innovation, which the insurgents had extorted from the Senate, at first appeared, it gradually subverted the constitution, by substituting licentiousness for liberty, and anarchy for subordination. The popular magistrates, who were intended to check the growing ambition of the Consuls and Senate, soon contrived to tyrannize over both, and by perpetual encroachments, gained an entire ascendancy in the state. Some of the Patricians foresaw these consequences, and were therefore desirous of abolishing this new order of magistracy, from which they apprehended not only the retrenchment of their own power, but even the destruction of the Republic. An occasion presented itself soon after their election, which many of the Senators thought favourable to this design.

In the year which followed the secession of the people to the *Sacred Mount*, the city was reduced to great distress by a famine, which was principally occasioned by the loss of the last seed-time, and the suspension of agricultural labours, during the late popular commotions. The Senate endeavoured in some degree to diminish this calamity, by purchasing corn from Sicily and many of the Italian states, which was deposited in the public granaries, till the time of scarcity should arrive. When the question of the terms on which the poor should be supplied with these provisions came before the Senate, it was proposed by some who were most adverse to the Tribunate, that the people should be first required to relinquish their plebeian magistrates, and return to their former



allegiance. Amongst those who contended most strenuously for this measure was CAIUS MARCIUS, a young Patrician, who began about that time to make a conspicuous figure both in the senate and the field. He had just returned from an expedition against the Volscians, in which his valour as a soldier, and his talent as a general, had been equally displayed. Charged by the Consul Cominius with conducting the siege of Corioli, he had rallied the Roman legions when fleeing before their enemies, driven back their pursuers, taken the city by storm; and, on the same day, marched to assist the Consul, who was engaged in a battle with the Antiates, and, by his seasonable aid, turned the scale of victory in favour of the Romans. These brilliant exploits obtained for the youthful warrior the most distinguished honours. In memory of his gallantry in taking the Volscian city, he was authorized henceforth to bear the name of *Coriolanus*. Such flattering marks of distinction in his youth could scarcely fail to produce that imperious temper and that undaunted character, which the future events of his life more fully developed.

The eloquence of Coriolanus in declaiming against the insolence of the Tribunes and *Ædiles*,\* was most grateful to the Senate, but it rendered him an object of suspicion and hatred to the plebeians. Contemplating him as their most formidable enemy, the Tribunes determined, if possible, to expel him from the city. They lost no opportunity of inflaming the public mind against this illustrious Patrician, whom they represented as the chief cause of their sufferings, and one who evidently aspired to sovereign authority. When they conceived that the people were sufficiently irritated against him, they nominated a day, on which he should be brought to public trial, as an enemy to the liberties of Rome. But though Coriolanus was well acquainted with the hostile

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\* The *Ædiles* were plebeian officers chosen to assist the Tribunes in the discharge of their duty, and whose especial business it was to superintend the markets and public shows; to take charge of the public buildings, and to act as subordinate officers of police.

sentiments of the people, who were to be both his accusers and judges, so conscious was he of integrity, and so fearless of danger, that he did not shrink from the trial. With a manly and irresistible eloquence he pleaded his own cause before the assembly, and would have been acquitted with honour, but for the interference of the Tribunes, who changed their ground of accusation, and charged him with having embezzled public property, by distributing amongst his own soldiers the spoils taken in war. Unjust as was this accusation, it was no sooner stated, than the enraged assembly, yielding to the blind impulse of passion, rather than to the dictates of equity, refused to listen to his defence, and sentenced him to perpetual banishment.

The exultation of the people on this victory obtained by the Tribunes over the Senate, was equal to that usually expressed on the most triumphal occasions. Nor was the consternation of the patricians less, at the public degradation of a senator, on whom their hopes were placed, and whom they had been accustomed to regard as the firmest pillar of the state. Coriolanus alone was unmoved. With a scornful smile, he looked round on the assembly, and without deigning a reply, left the forum. He then took a hasty leave of his mother and wife, whom he endeavoured to console by every consideration that philosophy or reason suggested, and immediately quitted Rome, unaccompanied by so much as a single domestic. But, though outwardly calm, the deep resentment that rankled in his breast, may be inferred from the desperate resolution he formed, of throwing himself into the arms of the most inveterate enemies of his country. He repaired to Antium, the scene of his former conquests, and, having entered in disguise the splendid mansion of Attius Tullus, (or as he is called by Plutarch, Tullus Aufidius,) the General of the Volscians, announced himself as "Caius Marcius Coriolanus, who had been driven by the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens to seek a refuge amongst the enemies of Rome, and who was now come to concert measures with those enemies for the destruction of his ungrateful country." The proposal of Coriolanus was too acceptable to the enterprising leader of the Volscians to



be rejected. Appearing to forget his former hostility, Tullus embraced the Roman exile as a friend, and introduced him without delay to the council, who immediately resolved on war with the Romans, and appointed the rival generals, joint commanders of their army.

Not doubting of success under the conduct of so able a general, the Volscians flocked to the standard of Coriolanus, and seemed already to anticipate with confidence, not only the recovery of their lost territories, but the speedy overthrow of their ancient and formidable rival. The renewal of the war was unexpected by the Romans, who fancied themselves secure from the usual incursions of this warlike people, by the recent conclusion of a truce for two years. When intelligence reached the city, that the Roman territories were invaded by a numerous army of Volscians under the command of Tullus and Coriolanus, its inhabitants were filled with consternation, and already gave up the republic as lost. Wholly unprepared for the arduous contest, and agitated with distracted councils, the Romans were unable to check the progress of Coriolanus, who pushed forward his conquests, taking every city and fortress that lay in his track, till he arrived without opposition at the gates of the metropolis. As Rome was almost destitute of provisions, and consequently incapable of sustaining a protracted siege, no time was to be lost; it became necessary either vigorously to oppose, or immediately to conciliate their revengeful foe. But terror paralyzed all the exertions of the Romans, and inclined them to submit to the most humiliating measures. Not only did the people formally repeal the sentence of banishment, into which they had been hurried by their passions, but they urged the senators to send daily and more pressing deputations to the Volscian camp, with the most supplicatory messages. Coriolanus received the ambassadors with an air of haughty contempt, and listening to their entreaties with cold indifference, remained inflexible. Hoping to overcome his resentments by religious, if not by patriotic motives, the Romans sent a solemn embassy, consisting of the whole body of priests, pontifices and augurs, clad in their most sacred habits, to conjure him by his

reverence for the gods of Rome, to spare his devoted country. But whilst he treated the ministers of religion with profound respect, he continued deaf to their entreaties, and expressed his firm determination to commence immediately an attack upon the city.

When this deputation returned without success, the whole population of Rome resigned themselves to despair, conceiving it impossible to devise any means of averting the imminent danger which threatened them. But in the midst of this public distress, Valeria, a Roman matron, the sister of Publicola, tried an expedient which proved successful. Having collected a train of honourable females, consisting of the wives and mothers of the most illustrious Senators, she conducted them in mourning attire to the late residence of Coriolanus. On their arrival they found Veturia and Volumnia, the mother and wife of the banished chief, bitterly lamenting their own misfortunes and those of their country. In the most pressing terms were these beloved relatives of the illustrious exile entreated to repair to his tent, and plead the cause of their country with all the tender eloquence of maternal and conjugal affection. But it was with the utmost difficulty that Valeria and her attendants could prevail upon Veturia and Volumnia to undertake the office of mediators; and when the latter consented, it was rather as a forlorn hope, than with the expectation of making any impression upon so impenetrable a mind.

Coriolanus was informed by his military guard that a long train of chariots containing women of distinction, amongst whom were his wife and mother, had issued from the city, and were entering the camp. He endeavoured to arm his resolution by every sentiment of pride and revenge, against the approaching struggle, which could not fail to put his firmness to the severest and most painful test. Thus equipt, he went forth from his tent to meet the most endeared objects of his affection, whom he ardently longed once more to embrace, yet whose suit, however earnest and pressing, he was resolved to reject. But no sooner did he meet the eye of his revered mother, which intelligibly expressed affectionate reproof and mental anguish—no sooner did he feel the tender embrace



and press the moistened cheek of his beloved Volumnia—than his heroism failed him, and he felt that to such supplicants he could refuse nothing. At the sight of a parent whom he had ever been accustomed to revere—upon her knees—conjuring him by every tender recollection, by every early and fond endearment—now threatening, if repulsed, to put an end to her existence—and now declaring that if he entered Rome as an enemy, it should be after treading upon her body, to whom he owed his being,—at the sight too of a wife whom he tenderly loved, and from whom he had been for some time separated, whose flowing tears, and silent grief, pleaded more powerfully than the most energetic words—and at the sight of his two infant sons, who were instructed to grasp his knees, and mingle their tears with those of the supplicating group—can we wonder that the haughty Roman was lost in the son, the husband, and the father; or that the proof-armour of wounded honour and mortified pride in which he had invested himself, was found insufficient to defend him from such resistless weapons? The softened hero, after an ineffectual struggle between honour and feeling, between the desire of revenge and natural affection—suddenly exclaimed, “Ay! my mother, you disarm me; Rome is saved, but your son is lost.” The articles to which he gave his assent were, to withdraw the Volscian army from before the city on the following day; to use his influence with the rulers of the Volsci to obtain an honourable peace; and, in case of their refusal, to tender his resignation. With this contract signed and sealed, Veturia returned joyfully to the city, where she was received with unbounded acclamations. In memory of this event, a temple was erected upon the spot in which the mother of Coriolanus had mediated so successfully, and a statue placed in the midst of it, bearing her name. Of this temple, which was dedicated to *Female Fortune*, Valeria was the first priestess.

Coriolanus had foreseen that his companions in arms would resent his disappointment of their hopes. Immediately after his return to Antium, Tullius accused him before the Volscian council of perfidy and treason, in having sacrificed their interests, to gratify his wife and

mother. Coriolanus was preparing to defend himself from this charge, or at least to extenuate the criminality of his conduct, when he was suddenly stabbed in the back by some assassins, whom Tullus Aufidius had suborned for that purpose. The Antiates performed his funeral obsequies with great pomp, and erected a costly monument to his memory.

Dionys. Halic. lib. 7 et 8. Liv. Hist. lib. 2. Plut. in vit. Coriol.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

What a variety of strange and sudden reverses were there in the life of Coriolanus! How instructive the picture it exhibits of the vicissitude of all human affairs, and the evanescence of all human glory! From having been the popular idol, greeted wherever he went with the applauses of admiring thousands, how quickly did he become the object of popular execration! He that was seen but as yesterday, entering the city in triumph, decorated with the laurels, and laden with the spoils of victory, to-day is driven out of the same city, by the ingratitude of his countrymen, a degraded and solitary exile. But soon the tide is turned, and this forlorn outcast is again seen at the head of a victorious army, encamped before the walls of the same city, threatening its immediate destruction, and giving laws to its terrified inhabitants. Once more the tide of prosperity ebbs, and discovers this invincible hero basely murdered by a treacherous foe, and indebted to strangers and enemies for the performance of his funeral obsequies. After contemplating such a character, whose whole existence was made up of contrasts, and formed a continual series of elevations and depressions, we are prepared to acknowledge the justice of those scriptural representations of human life, in which it is compared to a rapid stream, a transcient vapour, or a fading flower; we feel the force of the admonition,



“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

The preceding facts demonstrate the folly and danger of resigning ourselves to the blind impulse of passion, instead of listening to the dictates of wisdom, and the dominion of enlightened reason. To this source, both the calamities of the Roman people, and the fall of Coriolanus, may be distinctly traced. The former suffered themselves to be hurried by their infuriate passions into the adoption of measures, which their judgments, had they been consulted, would have instantly condemned, and of which they soon had cause to repent. The latter was betrayed by his resentments into a rash and intemperate act, which his generous soul must have abhorred, and which has covered him with perpetual infamy. So have the victims of anger been frequently precipitated into the most foolish and dangerous conduct—conduct which has covered them with lasting ignominy, and pierced them with unavailing regret. Let the young especially, who, on account of the ardour of their feelings, and the impetuosity of their dispositions, are most exposed to danger from this quarter, beware of surrendering themselves to those irascible passions, which will not only render them unlovely, but will probably lead to years of bitter repentance. Let them not suffer the voice of conscience and duty, (not to say that of interest, which may sometimes be lawfully regarded,) to be drowned amidst the clamours of vindictive anger, or stifled by the vapours of infernal revenge.

O Nature! how powerful is thy voice! how resistless thine eloquence! with what commanding energy dost thou speak to the heart, even though that heart be steeled by pride and passion, so as to resist every other impression! How often hast thou, by a word—by a look—penetrated the most unfeeling breast, and brought into willing subjection the most inflexible mind! But shall the pleadings of natural affection suffice to shake the firmest resolution and produce so remarkable a transmutation of character—and shall not genuine piety much more easily and effectually accomplish this mighty change? Yes; wherever pure and undefiled religion

enters and takes possession of the heart, a far more astonishing moral transformation takes place—the haughtiest spirit is abased, and the most ferocious tamed—the lion becomes a lamb—the “stout-hearted and such as are far from righteousness” are rendered contrite and broken in spirit. Passion is exchanged for meekness, pride for humility, revenge and hatred for universal benevolence. “The loftiness of man is bowed down, and the haughtiness of men made low, and the Lord alone is exalted in that day.” In proportion as the inward principle producing this moral change is more powerful than the mere sympathies of nature, the effect will be greater and more permanent. Happy, thrice happy they, who, subdued by the benignant and all-conquering influence of divine grace, become new creatures in Christ Jesus!

The Romans were for the most part characterized by fidelity to their country—a fidelity so invincible, that no enticements from without, and no injustice from within, could seduce them from their allegiance. And, in like manner, sincere Christians are distinguished from false professors by the steadfastness of their principles, and the uniformity of their obedience. Thus are they armed against the seductions of the world, and every other form of temptation, whether from within or from without. But as it appears from the preceding pages, that there was a Roman Senator, who dishonoured his name and rank, by forming an alliance with the enemies of that republic to which he had sworn allegiance; so have we sometimes seen the professed disciple of Christ, dishonouring his high and holy vocation, by uniting himself to the enemies of the Gospel. He becomes either a secret backslider, or an open apostate from the faith of Jesus. He is induced to co-operate with the infidel and the blasphemer, the profligate or the profane, in feeble endeavours to destroy that spiritual kingdom, which he has solemnly sworn to defend. But does he succeed in his treacherous design, or does he not rather, like the apostate Roman, bring down swift destruction upon his own head? Yes! it is written—and who can reverse the awful sentence?—“the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own way. Thine own wickedness shall correct



thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the LORD God of hosts." Prov. xiv. 14. Jer. ii. 19.

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## ESSAY IX.

*The Agrarian Law.*—T. QUINTIUS CINCINNATUS.—  
*The Decemvirate.*

FROM A. C. 485—450.

No sooner were the Romans freed from the terrors which the invasion of Coriolanus had occasioned, than hostilities recommenced between the Patricians and Plebeians. This breach was soon afterwards widened by the ambitious conduct of Sp. Cassius, a vain and aspiring senator, who aimed at elevating himself, by courting popular favour. He had been thrice Consul, and obtained two triumphs—distinctions which had served, but to inflame his vanity, and led him to aspire to yet higher dignities. With this view, he endeavoured to stir up contentions between the two principal factions in the state, that, in the mean time, he might more securely pursue his own advancement. He lost no opportunity of haranguing the multitude on his personal merits, the signal services he had rendered to his country, the rapacity and injustice of the patricians, and the sufferings and privations of the poor inhabitants of the city. On one occasion, he concluded an inflammatory speech of this description, with proposing a law, for the equal division of those lands, which had been obtained by conquest at different periods, amongst the necessitous plebeians. This was the purport of the celebrated *Agrarian Law*, which was first suggested by Cassius, and long continued to agitate the Commonwealth.

Such a proposal could not fail to be acceptable to the multitude, who had seen with indignation the aggrandizement of a few individuals by the spoils of war, whilst they themselves were greatly impoverished. It was received with acclamations of joy, and the Senate was called upon to sanction a decree without delay, which was expected to banish poverty from Rome. But the Tribunes were unwilling that so popular a measure should be carried by a patrician, and therefore resolved secretly to oppose it. They insinuated, that it was a snare laid by an ambitious Senator for their independence and liberties; that Cassius was but a disguised tyrant; and that they ought to suspect some treacherous design in this proffered benefit, which should proceed alone from the appointed guardians of the people. By such means, these turbulent demagogues, co-operating on this occasion with the enraged Senators, frustrated the measure, and obtained the degradation of Cassius, who was condemned to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock, as a traitor to the republic. But his death did not terminate the disputes respecting the Agrarian Law. The Tribunes, year after year, contended strenuously for its adoption, and it became necessary that the Senate should continually devise new expedients to divert the public mind from this favourite project. Sometimes by electing a popular Consul, and sometimes by creating a Dictator, whose office superseded that of the Tribunes, they contrived to silence the clamours, and allay the discontents of the people. At one time they circulated the rumour of a formidable invasion, and at another granted some new privileges, on condition of suspending these popular claims. Thus by various artifices, the Senators eluded a measure which would have been highly prejudicial, if not ruinous to their interests.

But though these temporary expedients sufficed to restrain the violence of popular discontents, they could not remove their cause, or effect a radical cure. Every disaster that befel the republic, whether of greater or less importance, caused the flames of discord to blaze anew. If the Consuls were unsuccessful in war—if a sudden irruption of needy adventurers swept away the produce



of their fields, and occasioned temporary distress—or if the Tribunes were at any time obstructed in their arbitrary and insolent proceedings, by the high-spirited Patricians—any of these occurrences were sufficient to renew former animosities, and to agitate afresh the public mind. Thus for example, a melancholy catastrophe which befel the Fabian family, by which every individual belonging to it, save one, was suddenly cut off,—the total defeat of a Roman army under the Consul Menenius—the riotous conduct of Cæso, a young patrician, the son of T. Quintius Cincinnatus, who entered the forum, at the head of a party of noble youths, and dispersed the tumultuous assembly—and the enterprise of Herdonius, a private Sabine, who collected 4000 followers, and suddenly surprised the Roman capital—all these events, which quickly succeeded each other, afforded the Tribunes an opportunity of inflaming the passions of the common people.

In the mean time, a new cause of discord arose. Terentius Arsa, one of the Tribunes, availed himself of the absence of the Consuls, to propose a measure which was calculated to diminish the consular dignity and authority. After having declaimed with great vehemence against the discretionary power granted to the Consuls, by which they were enabled to obstruct the enactment of those laws which were most beneficial to the people, he recommended the appointment of some of the wisest men in the Republic to the important office of Legislators, by whom a code of laws should be prepared, to which both the magistrates and people should be required to yield obedience. This proposition obtained the name of the *Terentian Law*, from that of the Tribune who first suggested it. It met with the most strenuous opposition from the superior orders, who could not brook the least invasion of their privileges, or even an imaginary infringement of their supposed rights. It was for the purpose of frustrating this measure, when on the point of being unanimously carried in an assembly of the people, that the son of Cincinnatus committed the act of violence which has just been stated—an offence which was punished by

the imposition of a heavy fine, the payment of which reduced his venerable father to a state of abject poverty.

But poverty in those days did not necessarily imply disgrace. Cincinnatus was still revered, after all his estates were sold, except a small farm on the banks of the Tiber, which he cultivated with his own hands, and upon the produce of which he depended for subsistence. The Senate were too sensible of his worth to permit him to live in this lowly retirement. At a critical juncture, they elected him to the Consulate, and sent ambassadors to apprise him of their choice, and invest him with the insignia of office. With extreme reluctance he quitted his rural occupations, to direct the helm of state in the midst of a tremendous storm. So wise and temperate, so dignified, and yet so conciliatory, was his administration, that the tumults of the people were quickly appeased, and tranquillity was happily restored. Though his consulate was distinguished by no splendid events, it has been justly classed with the most prosperous and memorable in the annals of Rome.

Scarcely had Cincinnatus relinquished his consular honours, and returned to his farm, when he was suddenly called to occupy a yet more arduous and honourable post. Minucius, one of the Consuls, engaged in war with the Æqui, had imprudently suffered himself and his whole army, consisting of the flower of the Roman youth, to be hemmed in by the enemy, where it was alike impossible to escape, or fight with any hope of success. Intelligence of this disaster no sooner reached the city, than Cincinnatus was created Dictator, who instantly raised levies, marched to the relief of the famished army of Minucius, liberated them from their imprisonment, compelled the enemy to surrender at discretion, and returning to Rome in triumph, resigned the dictatorship, which he had retained but during the space of fourteen days. Deeply impressed with gratitude for this signal service, the Senate and people vied with each other in loading their benefactor with honours; they would have added wealth, but this he utterly rejected, as an useless incumbrance. Satisfied with having extricated his countrymen from



imminent danger, and with having obtained, as the reward of his services, the recal of his son Quintius Coeso from banishment, he once more returned to his beloved retreat, and resumed his rustic occupations.

The contest respecting the Agrarian and Terentian Laws was renewed in the tribunate of Icilius, and led to the utmost confusion and anarchy. The Tribunes emboldened by success proceeded so far as to issue orders for the apprehension and imprisonment of the Consuls; and the Patricians in their turn broke up the assemblies of the people, when met to deliberate on these questions. It was in one of these assemblies, that Sicinius Dentatus, a plebeian soldier, forcibly appealed to the gratitude of his fellow-citizens. He stated “that he had borne arms in the service of the republic forty years—had been in a hundred and twenty engagements—had received forty-five wounds, all of which were in front—had obtained fourteen civic, three mural, and eight other crowns of different kinds—that he had been rewarded by different generals under whom he had served, with eighty-three golden collars, sixty golden bracelets, eighteen lances, and twenty-five sets of equestrian furniture—yet that notwithstanding all these public services, and the signal honours conferred upon him, he had remained to that hour without possessing a single acre of those lands which he had conquered with his sword, and which had served only to enrich the patricians.”


The assembly well knew that these were not unfounded assertions—they were not ignorant both of the military prowess and honourable poverty of Sicinius, and were stirred up by his remonstrances to demand more loudly the appointment of commissioners to divide the conquered lands. But the Senate still remained inflexible, and found excuses for delaying the execution of a law, which they feared to reject, and yet refused to sanction. To avenge themselves on Sicinius, who had so zealously pleaded for the Agrarian Law, they appointed him to a perilous enterprize, which could scarcely fail to prove fatal. But the skill and courage of that hardy veteran enabled him to surmount every difficulty, and he returned victorious, after having sustained incredible

hardships, and encountered the most appalling dangers. Being elected Tribune soon after his return, he cited the late Consuls, by whose orders his small but faithful band had been thus wantonly exposed, to appear before an assembly of the people, who imposed upon each of them a considerable fine, as a mark of public disgrace, and in token of their high displeasure.

At length both parties seemed to grow weary of their perpetual contentions and animosities. The Terentian Law was proposed in the Senate by Romilius, (one of the Consuls who had been lately fined,) and carried almost without opposition. Three deputies were chosen from amongst the patricians, who were instructed first to repair to Athens for the purpose of transcribing the celebrated laws of SOLON, and afterwards to visit the other chief cities of Greece, in order to examine their systems of jurisprudence, and collect from them such laws as were best suited to the Roman commonwealth. Sp. Posthumius, A. Manlius, and S. Sulpitius Camerinus, were the three Commissioners, to whom this important task was assigned. Hermodorus an Ephesian, accompanied them in their tour, as interpreter and translator—a sufficient evidence of the small progress which had as yet been made in literature, even by the highest order of Roman citizens. A dreadful plague which ravaged the whole of Italy chiefly engaged the public attention during the absence of the deputies. On their return ten Commissioners, called *Decemviri*, were chosen for the purpose of compiling from the Grecian documents, a code of laws for the future administration of the republic. The *Decemviri* were to retain their office twelve months, during which period they were to be invested with supreme authority, and all other offices were to be suspended. Appius Claudius and T. Genucius, the consuls elect, who had voluntarily relinquished their dignities in favour of the proposed Decemvirate, were first chosen—the three Grecian deputies, and five other eminent Senators were associated with them, who entered upon their new office with great moderation, and discharged its important functions with the most assiduous and constant attention.



Towards the close of the first year of the Decemvirate, these legislative magistrates presented a code, which they had compiled from the documents before them, for the approbation of the Senate and People. This code consisted of *Ten Tables*, to which two others were afterwards annexed, some fragments of which have been preserved to the present day. After both the Senate and a general Assembly of the People had sanctioned these laws by unanimous votes in their favour, they were engraven on plates of brass, and suspended in the forum, that they might be equally accessible to the poorest, and most opulent citizens in the republic.



## REFLECTIONS.

A more disorganized government, or a more wretched state of society can scarcely be imagined, than that of Rome during the period to which the present essay refers. It is true, the Commonwealth presented an appearance of vigour and prosperity. She was able to repel her most formidable invaders, and extend her foreign conquests. But these flattering symptoms, far from indicating her political health, resembled rather the hectic glow, the rapid and unnatural growth, or the feverish and convulsive struggles, which are frequently observed in the victims of disease. At the same moment in which these illusive appearances were seen, an inward and alarming malady preyed upon her vitals, and threatened her speedy dissolution. In vain were her generals skilful—her warriors brave—and her citizens numerous—since the fruits of victory served but to multiply the sources of strife, and her very prosperity but increased her capacity for suffering. Whatever might be the speculations and conclusions of philosophical inquirers on the nature, causes, and influence of these contentions, the Christian moralist will be at no loss to discover their common spring. They unquestionably originated in the depravity both of the higher and lower orders of society :

they demonstrated that "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint:" they indicated most clearly the vitiated state of the whole social body.

The expedient which was ultimately adopted for the purpose of diminishing these evils, namely, the institution of a civil code, to which both rulers and their subjects might appeal, was most certainly founded in wisdom. For nothing tends more to perpetuate lawful authority, and promote general tranquillity—nothing is better calculated to render a government secure, and a people happy—than the substitution of wise and salutary laws, in place of discretionary power, and lawless despotism. But if human codes, which are necessarily imperfect, tend to restrain the licentious passions of mankind—if *they* have so important and powerful an influence upon the peace and happiness of social life—how much more may results like these be anticipated from a divine law, whose precepts are infinitely more pure, and whose sanctions, infinitely more sacred and obligatory! Thanks be to God, we need not send to remote climes in search of this unerring standard of truth and holiness—for "the word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our hearts." It is emblazoned in bright and indelible characters before our eyes. It is accessible to all, who inhabit our highly-favoured shores.

Let us not disdain to learn, even from the Romans, that poverty does not necessarily imply disgrace, and that the most valuable characters may sometimes lie concealed beneath the shades of adversity and sorrow. Cincinnatus possessed those sterling virtues that rendered him alike noble and illustrious, whether he guided the plough, or commanded armies—whether clad in rustic apparel, or invested with the consular purple. He despised that glittering pomp, which surrounds the sons of opulence, but which can confer no real dignity on their character. And shall those who enjoy superior light, and are engaged in the pursuit of durable riches and immortal honours, yield to the grovelling propensities of the avaricious worldling? Shall they pursue with the utmost avidity those treasures which perish in the using, and which even virtuous heathens knew how to



tread under foot, with a dignified, if not a sacred indifference?

Had the affairs of Rome continued prosperous, it is probable that this fallen Senator would have been overlooked, and completely forgotten by the haughty patri- cians; his peaceful retirement, his rural occupations, would have been undisturbed to the hour of his death. But affliction taught them his value, and constrained them to solicit his counsel and aid, when danger threat- ened the commonwealth. Thus virtuous poverty, though branded with reproach by the wealthy proud, is some- times seen to break forth as the morning; and those who despised, are constrained to do her homage. Thus too is the lowly Christian frequently resorted to, in the hour of sickness and alarm, by those, who, in the day of their prosperity, have loaded him with contempt, and cast out his name as evil. It was thus that the haughty Monarch of Egypt, when visited with the judgment of the Almighty, sent for the despised Hebrews whom he had lately driven from his presence, and earnestly en- treated their forgiveness and their prayers. See Exod. ix. 27, 28—x. 16, 17.

Perilous was the situation from which Cincinnatus rescued Menenius and his army, but it was one into which they had been betrayed by their own imprudence. If they had perished (and nothing else could have been expected) their destruction would have lain at their own door. But the brave, the generous Cincinnatus, no sooner heard of their imminent danger, than he flew to their relief, vanquished their enemies, and set them at liberty. Thus perilous, (if we may illustrate events of infinite magnitude and eternal importance, by those which were far inferior,) thus perilous was the condition of the whole human race, when the illustrious Captain of their salvation undertook to rescue them from inevitable destruction. When involved by their own voluntary transgressions in a condemnation from which they had no means of escape—this compassionate friend—this Al- mighty Redeemer—hastened to their succour, and with his own right hand accomplished their deliverance. He led captivity captive. He snatched the prey from the

mighty, and delivered the victims of the terrible; after which, he ascended up on high to occupy a throne of majesty, which he must continue to fill, till all his enemies become his footstool. O! what immortal honours, what exalted and unceasing praises, are due to Him, who has thus "remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever!"

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## ESSAY X.

### *On the Abolition of the Decemvirate.*

A. C. 448.

THE Decemviri had not completed their task, when the year of their office expired; but as their administration had been characterized by moderation and prudence, it was not difficult to secure their re-election. Appius Claudius, the grandson of the Senator, whose name was mentioned in a former essay, by his popular manners and insinuating address, had obtained the entire confidence of all classes, and elevated himself to the head of the Decemvirate. But it soon appeared that these were artifices employed to perpetuate and increase his authority. After the day of election, he assembled his colleagues, and secretly communicated to them his design of abolishing the Consulate, superseding the power of the Senate, and prohibiting all popular assemblies, assuring them that if they firmly adhered to each other, nothing could wrest the sceptre out of their hands. The proposal was cordially approved by the rest of the Decemviri, who entered into a covenant to support each other in the maintenance of their delegated authority.

In pursuance of this design, these magistrates assumed more state than in the former year, by increasing the number of lictors who attended them on all public occasions, and now formed a guard of 120 armed soldiers, whose glittering fasces were calculated to inspire the



common people with terror and dismay. The elder Senators, for the most part, forsook the city, and either retired to their country residences, or banished themselves from the territories of the republic. The younger patricians, no longer restrained in their criminal pleasures, rejoiced in a government, which permitted and even sanctioned their excesses, and which, for this reason alone, they were resolved to support. The people, deprived of their tribunes, resigned themselves in silent despair to a tyranny, which daily became more oppressive, and more formidable.

Such was the state of Rome, when the Æqui and Sabines again poured their hostile legions into the territories of the republic, and obliged the Decemviri to convene the Senate with all possible expedition. They obtained with great difficulty the sanction of that august body to a decree which authorized them to levy forces, and divide amongst themselves the command of the armies which should be raised. Appius remained at home to keep the people in subjection, whilst his colleagues hastened to check the progress of the invaders, who had already taken several cities, and were advancing with rapid strides towards the capital. The Roman armies were at first defeated with great loss, either on account of the incapacity of their leaders, or the disaffection of the troops.

In the mean time Siccus Dentatus, (the popular veteran mentioned in the last essay,) availed himself of these calamities to incense the public mind against the tyrants, and demand the restoration of their liberties. The ruling Decemvir affected to despise, but in reality feared him, and secretly meditated his destruction. For this purpose, Siccus was entrusted with an honourable commission in the army under the command of Fabius Vibulanus, to whom private instructions were sent at all events to procure his death. The commission was faithfully observed, and Siccus privately assassinated. In vain did the perpetrators of this nefarious transaction endeavour to conceal it by appearing to lament his decease, and by paying greater honours to his remains than had ever been permitted to plebeians: the circum-

stances of his death quickly transpired ; its authors were discovered, and the public indignation was wrought up to the highest pitch.

Scarcely had the popular tumults subsided, which the murder of Siccus Dentatus occasioned, when a still more atrocious crime completed the guilt, and accomplished the ruin of the Decemvir. During the absence of his colleagues, Appius had constantly attended at the hall of justice, to hear appeals, and execute the laws. In passing through the public schools for this purpose, a girl of singular beauty, who attended there for instruction, caught his eye. His impure mind was instantly inflamed with a criminal passion for this female, who had scarcely attained her fifteenth year, and was still under the care of a faithful nurse. He learnt by his spies, that her name was Virginia, that her mother Numitoria was dead, that her father Virginius served as centurion in Vibulanus' army, and that she was betrothed to the late tribune Icilius, who was to marry her at the close of the campaign. Yet notwithstanding this intelligence, so unfavourable to his hopes, he determined at all events to gratify his passion, and with this view basely resorted to the customary arts of seduction. But the modesty of Virginia and the inflexible fidelity of her attendant rendered all those artifices unavailing. Burning with rage and passion, which became more violent in proportion to the checks they had received, the guilty Decemvir concerted a scheme with one of his clients, the cruelty and injustice of which have never been exceeded. He instructed M. Claudius—one of that infamous class who are wont to insinuate themselves into the confidence of the great by ministering to their criminal pleasures—to claim Virginia as the daughter of one of his slaves, and consequently as his lawful property. In pursuance of this design, Claudius entered the schools, and taking the trembling Virginia by the hand, attempted to drag her away by force ; but the cries of the injured maid and of her vigilant attendant, attracted so much notice, that he was obliged to delay the immediate execution of his purpose, and have recourse to judicial process. Appius Claudius was then in the hall of justice, trying



causes and pronouncing judgment; to him therefore the question was referred.

The Decemvir, with much apparent impartiality, listened to the claims of Claudius on the one part, and the defence of Numitorius, the uncle of Virginia, on the other; and concluded with deciding in favour of the former, whom he authorized to take immediate possession of the fair victim, requiring him at the same time to give security for her appearance before him, if Virginius, her reputed father, should on his return home, demand her restoration. In vain did the friends and guardians of Virginia entreat, that the decision of this question might be suspended till her father could be brought from the camp, and that till then she might be permitted to remain with her affectionate nurse. In vain did the whole assembly express by murmurs their conviction of the injustice of the sentence. The lictors were employed to open a way through the crowd for Claudius to seize his hapless prey—when suddenly a youth of an interesting countenance and dignified mien, pressed through the multitude of spectators, and demanded with the tone of authority, an arrest of judgment. It was Icilius, the popular and eloquent Tribune, to whom Virginia had been contracted, and who now claimed her as his own. The firmness and popularity of Icilius were well known to Appius, who now deemed it prudent so far to modify his sentence, as to permit the friends of Virginia to retain possession of her person till the morrow, when the cause was to be finally decided.

From the hall of justice, Icilius hastened to the camp at Algis, and having disclosed the whole business to Virginius, both returned without delay to the city, where they arrived about midnight; happy in having escaped the messengers, whom Appius had sent to order the immediate arrest and detention of the latter. Early in the morning, Virginius, his daughter, and a numerous train of relatives, entered the forum in mourning attire, and with dejected countenances. A multitude of citizens quickly assembled, whom, both Virginius and Icilius addressed in terms the most pathetic and impressive,

before the arrival of the Decemvir. Appius concealed his surprise at the sight of Virginus, whose unexpected return disconcerted all his measures. The issue however was, as might have been anticipated from such an iniquitous mode of procedure, that the claims of Claudius were confirmed, and the evidence brought forward by the afflicted parent, discredited and scorned. The sentence was pronounced—a host of lictors rushed forward, dispersing on every side the terrified multitude, and proceeded to drag the fainting Virginia from the fond embraces of her parent, who felt the separation under such circumstances to be intolerable. His purpose was immediately fixed. One way alone remained, by which he could preserve his child from brutal violence, and that, however cruel it might appear—however torturing to his parental feelings—he determined to adopt. Throwing his arms once more around the neck of his beloved Virginia, as if to take a last farewell, he gently whispered, “Thus, thus only can I preserve thee, my dearest child, from contamination and slavery,” and plunged a poniard into her heart; then holding up the fatal weapon, still reeking with a daughter’s blood, he exclaimed aloud, “By this innocent blood, I devote thy guilty head, O Appius, to the infernal gods.” The paralyzed assembly looked on with silent horror, and even the armed guard of Appius heard not the repeated mandates of the tyrant, “to seize and bind the murderer.” Virginus, with the same instrument, which had pierced his daughter’s heart, opened to himself a way through the assembly, and breathing revenge and slaughter, hastened to the camp, to communicate the melancholy tidings of his bereavement to his brethren in arms.

In the mean time, Numitorius and Icilius, fearless of danger, and no longer awed by the presence of the Decemvir, exhibited to the people the body of Virginia, streaming with blood, and earnestly besought them to avenge her death. The report of this tragical event quickly circulated through the city. Patricians and plebeians, in mingled crowds, pressed towards the forum. Amongst the first of these were Valerius and Horatius, two popular Senators, who had evinced on many former



occasions, their patriotic zeal, and hatred of tyranny, by whomsoever practised; but more especially had they opposed themselves to the ambitious projects of Appius and his colleagues. They now came forward to protect the relatives of Virginia from the fury of the oppressor, who threatened their lives, and constrained him to seek a temporary shelter in some obscure dwelling.

The remains of Virginia were borne in an open litter through the principal streets of the city, and wherever the melancholy procession passed, nothing was heard but execrations of the tyrant, whose lawless passion had constrained a parent to sacrifice his beloved child. The men scattered perfumes, and the women garlands of flowers upon her bier, mingled with their tears and tenderest regrets. The whole population of the city sympathized with the weeping train of bereaved relatives, and seemed only to wait the signal of some popular leader, to begin the work of revenge.

Whilst Rome was thus agitated, and its inhabitants ripe for revolt, the legions that composed the army at Algis, were no less affected by the sorrows of Virginius. Not satisfied with expressing their detestation of the conduct of Appius, they extended their resentments to the whole Decemvirate, and determined on the immediate abolition of an office, which had thus gradually degenerated into an oppressive tyranny. With one consent, the troops forsook their superior officers, and marched back to the city in perfect order, under the command of their respective centurions. On their arrival, the Roman legions quietly posted themselves on the Aventine hill, equally resolved to refrain from violent measures, and to obtain the restitution of their ancient rights. They elected ten *military Tribunes*, who were to conduct the negotiation, which was opened with the Senators and Patricians. The other Roman army which had been opposed to the Sabines, followed their example, and entering the city, under the command of ten other military Tribunes, chosen by themselves, joined their brethren on the Aventine hill.

To detail the proceedings of the two parties would be both tedious and useless. It is sufficient to state, that

they issued in the re-election of *Cónsuls*, the first of whom were *Valerius* and *Horatius*, and of *Tribunes* of the people, at the head of whom were the father, and contracted husband of *Virginia*. *Appius* perished in prison; either by his own hands, or by the dagger of an assassin; and the rest of the *Decemviri* escaped by flight, with the exception of *Oppius*, who is supposed to have destroyed himself in prison. Thus was the innocent blood of *Virginia* signally avenged, whose death, like that of *Lucretia*, gave liberty a second time to the Romans.

*Dionys. Hal. lib. 10 et 11. Liv. Hist. Rom. lib. 3.*

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The preceding facts are calculated to teach us the vanity of human hopes, and the disappointments to which they are perpetually liable. Great was the joy, and elevated were the expectations of the Roman people, when the *Decemvirate* was first instituted; and especially when they saw a Senator so affable in his manners, so condescending in his general deportment, and so patriotic in his professions, as *Appius Claudius* had hitherto been, placed at the head of this new order of magistracy. Then they flattered themselves that their liberties were secure, and their prosperity certain. But soon, very soon was this joy turned into sorrow, and those fond hopes vanished as though they had never been. The idol of the people became their scourge, and all their dreams of peace and happiness were dissipated at once by the unjust and arbitrary proceedings, which have been briefly narrated. How often has this lesson been repeated in various forms since the days of *Appius*, and repeated without effect! Still do the successive generations of mankind, untaught by the experience of former ages, cherish delusive hopes, and continue to place that confidence in a fellow-worm, which is due to God only. Fondly do they anticipate from the gratifications of sense, and the acquisition of wealth, or worldly distinctions, that contentment and satis-



faction, which they can never impart, till the painful conviction is forced upon them, that these are at best, but “broken cisterns which can hold no water.” If we would cherish a confidence that will not deceive us—a hope that will not make us ashamed—that hope must rest alone on the divine promises—that confidence must be fixed upon the Rock of eternal ages.

The circumstances in which the father of Virginia was placed, were peculiarly trying; but neither these, nor any other which could be imagined, can justify the crime of murder. It is true, the laws of Rome at that time gave the parent an uncontrolled authority over his child; it was then the frequent practice of parents to deprive their children of liberty, and inflict upon them the severest punishments at their pleasure; nor could they be arraigned and condemned for the murder of their offspring, as in all other cases of homicide. Yet reason and conscience, independently of Revelation, might have taught the Roman father, that the Author of Life has alone a supreme right over it; and that to deprive ourselves or others of that existence which he has imparted, is to infringe upon his sacred prerogative. Genuine and enlightened piety would have suggested under such circumstances, to refer the cause to Him who is “a refuge for the oppressed,” and after having used all prudent and lawful means of self-defence, confidently to expect that deliverance, which God will assuredly work out, in the hour of extremity, for those who trust in him. Yet who can severely blame the immolation of this fair victim upon the altar of chastity, when the prevailing ignorance of the times, and virtuous affection which prompted the rash act, are duly considered? Who is not constrained to admire, (although that admiration must be mingled with regret,) the delicacy and moral susceptibility of that parent, who chose rather to weep over a daughter’s urn, than to witness her disgrace; and who even preferred to become her executioner, by inflicting the mortal wound, rather than to see her vitiated and defiled, the subject of brutal violence, and the prey of a lawless libertine?

But if such be the anguish, the torture, the mental distraction of a virtuous parent, who has cause to appre-

hend the irreparable disgrace of his endeared offspring, what inhuman monsters must they be who can sport with these acute and honourable feelings, and purchase a moment's criminal gratification at such a price? It were, however, fruitless to expostulate with those who are deaf to the remonstrances of conscience, and the terrors of the divine law, on the heart-rending distresses to which they subject many a virtuous mind, and the grey hairs they bring with sorrow to the grave. For if the more solemn considerations of death and eternity fail to impress the mind—if they are insufficient to impose any permanent restraint upon the licentious passions of the youthful profligate, it can scarcely be expected that he will yield to the mere force of sympathy, or to the feebler influence of natural feeling. How are the justice and wisdom of God displayed in making sinful passions the scourge of the individual who indulges them! In seeking to gratify his vile desires, Appius hurled himself from his seat of power, and brought destruction on himself and his associates. Thus does the Righteous Judge not only make the conscience of the sinner his tormentor, but also in many instances, the hand of the sinner his own avenger; and those sins, in which he most delighted, become the instruments of his punishment and disgrace.

How many have read with the deepest interest the tragical tale of Virginia's death, who either pass unnoticed, or read with perfect indifference, the infinitely more touching narrative of the sufferings of the Redeemer! And yet what was there in the former case to excite sympathy which does not exist in a far higher degree in the latter? Was Virginia innocent—her innocence becomes deformity and pollution itself, when contrasted with the purity of Him, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Was it a father's hand that inflicted the mortal wound—thus (if we may with becoming reverence allude to so awful a subject,) thus did the Eternal Father not spare his own Son! The sentence went forth, "Awake, O sword, against the Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord;" and immediately the sword of divine vengeance was sheathed in the spotless bosom of the Incarnate Son of God. Or, finally,



did Virginia's death procure liberty for an oppressed people—how much more glorious the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free! When he came, “travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save,”—when He “redeemed us to God by his blood,”—the yoke of oppression was broken—salvation was proclaimed to the ends of the earth—and Satan, the infernal tyrant, “fell like lightning from heaven!”

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## ESSAY XI.

*On the Creation of Military Tribunes, and Censors.—*  
*CAMILLUS.—Rome taken by the Gauls.*

FROM A. C. 448—389.

THE Republic had scarcely escaped one danger, before it was exposed to another of almost equal magnitude, though from an opposite quarter. The new Tribunes, whose re-establishment the people had witnessed with so much satisfaction, conceived the design of rendering their office perpetual; and, the more effectually to secure this object, proposed that Horatius and Valerius, the two popular Consuls, to whom the Romans were so greatly indebted for the restoration of their liberties, should also retain the supreme magistracy. But this new conspiracy against the commonwealth was frustrated by the moderation and firmness of Duilius, one of the Tribunes, who steadfastly opposed the ambitious project; and by the inflexible patriotism of the Consuls, who could not be prevailed upon to accept of the prolongation of their authority. From these domestic feuds, the public attention was for a time diverted by foreign wars, in which the Romans were uniformly successful; particularly during the consulship of T. Quintius, who was no less esteemed for the wisdom of his counsels, than for the splendour of his victories.

After the lapse of a few years, a new subject of conten-

tion arose to which it would be unnecessary to advert, but that it led to an important change in the government of the republic, and to the constitution of two new offices. The plebeians complained of the injustice of those laws which prohibited patricians from intermarrying with their order, and by which they were excluded from the consulship. Cornelius, one of the Tribunes, assured the Senate of his determination to oppose all levies of troops, till these obnoxious laws should be repealed. After much discussion, the law which related to the intermarriage of patricians with plebeians was abrogated; and that which excluded plebeians from the consulate was virtually relinquished by the institution of a new order of magistrates, endowed with consular authority, half of whom might be of plebeian rank. These magistrates, who were called Military Tribunes, from their being entrusted with the command of the Roman armies, continued, through a long series of years, to interrupt the regular succession of Consuls; so that, whenever the people gained the ascendancy, Military Tribunes were chosen; but when the patricians prevailed, Consuls were re-elected. About the same time, the increased population of Rome and its dependencies, rendered it necessary to appoint officers to superintend the census, which, according to the laws of Rome, was to be taken every fifth year. These officers were called Censors, and were at first intended solely to relieve the Consuls or Military Tribunes of a subordinate part of their burden; but by degrees they rose to such dignity and importance, that the censorship became the most dignified and desirable office in the state. The Censors were the official inspectors of public morals, who could at their pleasure degrade persons of senatorial or equestrian rank, or exclude plebeians from their privilege of voting at public assemblies. This formidable power was at first entrusted to none but patricians of established reputation, who continued in office five years; but afterwards, that, as well as every other civil dignity, was open to plebeians, in common with those of patrician rank, and its duration considerably abridged.

The attentive reader of the preceding pages must



have observed that the Veientes were amongst the most formidable and enterprising enemies of Rome. Scarcely a league was formed amongst the Italian states of which they were not the instigators and promoters. No sooner did a faction disturb the tranquillity of the republic, than the Veientes availed themselves of the circumstance to ravage its territories with fire and sword. Though frequently repulsed and defeated with great loss, the citizens of Veii were ever ready to renew the attack with unabated vigour. Aware that security could not be enjoyed so long as this rival city flourished, or rather, desirous of enriching themselves with the spoils of so wealthy a capital, the Romans determined to wage a war not of conquest merely, but of extermination. The task proved difficult, and long continued to baffle their most vigorous efforts. It was necessary to keep armies on foot year after year, and to carry on their military operations both during the winter and summer season. This necessity involved another, that of levying taxes for the payment of the troops, who had hitherto served gratuitously, and furnished themselves with arms and provision, without expectation of any other reward, than that which their valour might wrest from the enemy's grasp. The practice of keeping standing armies, hired for the work of destruction, and of drawing a line of demarcation between the soldier and the citizen, may be distinctly traced from this period of Roman history—a practice which certainly led to the aggrandizement of the republic, but which, with no less certainty, accelerated its fall.

After nearly ten years had been consumed in an arduous and doubtful contest, it was determined to elevate M. Furius Camillus to the dictatorship—a general, whose consummate skill and personal valour had been frequently put to the test, and had never failed. Nor were the expectations of his fellow-citizens deceived on this occasion, for the appearance of so illustrious a commander at the head of the armies, in the revered character of a Dictator, was of itself sufficient to rouse the courage and revive the hopes of the soldiers. Under his auspices, the siege of Veii was carried on with such vigour and success, that at length that strongly fortified

city, the bulwark of Etruria, and the most illustrious in arts and arms of all the Italian commonwealths, was taken by storm. The plunder was immense, all of which was divided amongst the troops who had sustained the hardships and perils of the siege, and such of the Roman citizens as had, previously to the attack, repaired to the Dictator's standard. The tidings of the capture of Veii occasioned the most rapturous joy throughout the republic—a splendid triumph was decreed to the conqueror, and four successive days were employed in public thanksgivings.

The popularity of Camillus, proved however but of short duration. His demand of a tenth of the spoils to be consecrated to Apollo, (according to a vow which he had made in the hour of danger, but which in the moment of victory had been forgotten)—the extraordinary pomp in which he had entered the capital on the day of triumph—and the opposition afterwards made by him to some popular measures, were circumstances which concurred to render him an object of jealousy and aversion. His enemies at last proceeded so far as to prosecute him for the supposed offence of having embezzled the property of the state. Indignant at such a base and groundless accusation, he retired from Rome before the day of trial; and, as he passed through the gate of the city, is said to have prayed “that some speedy calamity might convince his ungrateful countrymen of their error, and constrain them to recall him for their defence.” The superstition of the people led them to believe that the destruction of their city, which quickly followed the retreat of Camillus, was a consequence of these imprecations, and a proof of the displeasure of the gods at their ingratitude to the benefactor and guardian of the republic.

The Gallic invasion, which proved so calamitous in its effects, originated in the imprudence of three Roman youths of the Fabian family, who were sent to mediate between the inhabitants of Clusium, a small city of Tuscany, and Brennus the leader of the Transalpine Gauls. Unmindful of the character they sustained, as Roman ambassadors, and irritated by the imperious conduct of Brennus, these ardent youths became the partizans of the



Clusini, incited them to arms, and even headed their troops in an assault, in which several of the Gauls were slain. This violation of honour and justice exasperated Brennus in so high a degree, that he determined to raise the siege of Clusium, and turn his arms against the Romans, who had sanctioned the treachery of their ambassadors by refusing to deliver them up to his heralds. He marched at the head of a numerous army through the lesser Italian states, and the countries which were tributary to the Romans, without meeting with any obstruction till he arrived at the river Allia, a few miles distant from the capital, where he encountered and completely routed the Roman army. If Brennus had followed up this victory by hastening to Rome, there can be no doubt that the city would have fallen an easy prey, and the Roman name had probably been extinguished for ever. But the conquerors continued on the field of battle two days, plundering the Roman camp, and indulging in every kind of excess, by which means sufficient time was given to the Romans to send away their wives and children, and to fill the Capitol with troops, military stores, and provisions. On the third day after the battle the Gauls marched forward to the city, and were surprised to find its gates open, its walls, streets, and houses completely deserted, without the smallest attempt having been made to defend them. On entering the senate-house, they were still more surprised to find there eighty venerable patricians, seated in their ivory chairs, drest in their most splendid senatorial robes, and holding in their hands the wands of office; who maintained a profound silence, and waited, with an unmoved countenance, the approach of the enemy. At first the Gauls contemplated these hoary-headed Senators with a species of veneration, as though they had been the tutelar deities of Rome; but when one of the most courageous among them, presuming to touch the beard of Papirius, received in return a severe blow from that senator's ivory wand, the barbarians were so irritated, as to draw their swords, and murder without distinction this unresisting and venerable band. The whole city was then given up to plunder, and quickly reduced to ashes.

The hill on which the Roman Capitol was built was so difficult of access, and so well defended, that Brennus was unable to make any impression upon it by open assault. He could therefore only hope to reduce this important garrison, which contained all the remaining strength of Rome, by a protracted siege, and cutting off every source of supply. In the mean time, he was himself harassed by Camillus, who no longer remembered the ingratitude of his countrymen, but hastened to their relief with such forces as he could collect from the scattered fugitives of the vanquished Roman army. Whilst this enterprising general was preparing to co-operate with his besieged fellow-citizens, the Capitol was nearly taken by surprise. The traces of footsteps were observed by some of the soldiers of Brennus leading up to the Capitol, by a steep and rugged way which had hitherto been considered inaccessible, and consequently had been left unguarded. The footsteps were those of a Roman youth, who had undertaken to bear to Camillus a commission from the Roman Senate, appointing him Dictator, and entreating him to hasten to their relief. By this track a select corps of Gauls attempted at midnight to climb unobserved to the citadel, and would have succeeded, but for the alarm given by some sacred geese kept in the temple of Juno, which aroused the guard, and afforded an opportunity to Manlius, a patrician of distinguished valour, to defend the rampart with his single arm, till his colleagues came to his assistance. After the siege had lasted more than six months, both parties were reduced to almost equal extremities, and Brennus beginning to despair of reducing the garrison, offered to raise the siege upon the payment of a thousand pounds weight of gold. The famished Romans eagerly accepted of the proposal, and were in the act of weighing out the gold, when Camillus arrived at the head of a formidable army, and proceeding to the place of conference, commanded the gold to be carried back to the Capitol, exclaiming with a tone of authority, "The Romans are wont to purchase their freedom, not with gold, but with iron." The treaty being thus abruptly broken off, both parties prepared for battle,



and the Gauls were completely vanquished. A few of the rude invaders escaped by flight, but by far the greater part perished amidst the ruins of the desolated city.

After the annihilation of the Gallic army, a question arose amongst the Romans, whether they should proceed to rebuild the city, or remove to Veii, within whose walls many of their fellow-citizens had already found a shelter. The Tribunes of the people strenuously contended for the latter proposition, but Camillus, aided by the superstitions of the people, who adhered to the tombs of their forefathers, and the ruins of their ancient temples, obtained a vote in favour of the former. The work proceeded with such rapidity, that in less than twelve months, the city was rebuilt, though much of its former magnificence was lost, and most of the public records were irrecoverably destroyed.

Plut. in vit. Camill. Liv. Hist. lib. 3, 4, 5. Dionys. Hal. lib. 11.

#### REFLECTIONS.

How numerous and diversified are the dangers which beset us in every walk of life! Whether we move in a private or in a more public sphere, whether the station we occupy be elevated or obscure, it is impossible to avoid them; it is the part of wisdom and prudence to be prepared for them. For those are the most formidable dangers which are least expected and feared, and which overtake us, as we are taught to believe the day of judgment will overtake impenitent sinners, "like a thief in the night." It was thus that the Romans were unexpectedly threatened with the subversion of their liberties, not from the patricians whom they had been accustomed to consider inimical to them, but from their own Tribunes, those in whom they confided, as the guardians of their most sacred rights. Thus too were they suddenly conquered and desolated; not by their ancient enemies, the Hetrurians or Sabines, whom they most feared, but

by a host of barbarians, whom they were neither prepared to expect or resist. So has it been often seen, that those who were in some measure guarded against outward temptation, have yielded to the seductions of their own depraved minds; and those who have stood firm amidst the perils of public life, have afterwards fallen in solitude and retirement. Let none therefore fancy themselves secure, even though placed in circumstances which may appear to be most favourable to moral and religious improvement; but let him "that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall."

In the character of Camillus, there are many interesting traits, though mingled with others which are less attractive; we cannot but admire his generous patriotism, his steady perseverance in the execution of those perilous services to which he was called by his country, and his promptness to succour, in the hour of their extremity, those who had traduced and injured him. The part he acted was noble, when compared with that of Coriolanus; for instead of seeking to avenge his wrongs, by joining the standard of his country's foes, he calmly waited at Ardea, the moment in which he might again prove himself the benefactor and preserver of Rome. From such an example, let not Christians disdain to learn the duty of forgiving injuries and overcoming evil with good. Yet there is one instance in which the conduct of this great man (for such he must unquestionably be considered) falls far beneath the standard at which we should aim. In the moment of irritation and weakness he could not refrain from invoking speedy calamities upon those who had falsely accused him. But no irritated state of feeling, no temporary weakness, will excuse those, who having the precepts of the Gospel, the law of Benevolence and Love, emblazoned before their eyes, indulge a similar temper towards even their worst enemies. While contemplating such a character as that of Camillus, in which wisdom was happily combined with courage, prudence with ardour, perseverance with decision, who can forbear to utter a wish, that energies like those which he and many other illustrious generals have employed for the destruction of mankind, were



exerted for their preservation and happiness—and that the same fervent zeal, the same invincible courage, the same determined perseverance, were brought to bear upon the moral and religious interests of the human race.

How unlike is that faint gleam which stoicism shed over the last moments of its votaries, to the bright and celestial glow which gilds the shade of death, while the humble believer in Jesus is passing through it. There was, it is true, a sort of philosophical dignity, a proud serenity exhibited by the aged senators, who either from motives of superstition or patriotism devoted themselves to death. But how unlike was this to the sacred heroism of those primitive confessors and martyrs who counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might finish their course with joy; who shrunk not back from the flaming sword of persecution, when it was brandished in their faces; who endured, not with stoical apathy, but under the influence of a triumphant faith—not from the hope of posthumous fame, but in the expectation of obtaining a better resurrection.

We have seen that though the city which bore that name was reduced to ashes by a fierce and vindictive foe, yet Rome herself survived the general desolation. Her walls indeed were levelled with the ground, her temples and palaces became a mass of ruins, and scarcely a trace remained of her former greatness; yet there was a part in which the essence, the vitality of Rome consisted, which was beyond the reach of the stern invader. Thus too there is a spiritual, an immortal part of man, which the last enemy cannot touch. It is true, the body may, and assuredly will, become his prey; the earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved: the material temple, which was reared by the Divine Architect with consummate skill and wisdom, shall be laid in ruins, and all the visible pomp and external splendour of man will perish—but the imperishable soul will still exist, it will renew its youth, and continue to flourish through eternal ages.

## ESSAY XII.

*A General View of the Religion, Philosophy, and Literature of the Romans, during the first Period of their History.*

THE calamity which befel the Romans in the capture and conflagration of their city, was attended with irreparable loss, since it involved the destruction of most of the public records and monuments of antiquity, which former ages had accumulated. After the most diligent search none of these could be discovered amongst the mass of ruins, except some fragments of ancient treaties with neighbouring states, which had been engraven on pillars erected for that purpose, and some of the laws of the "twelve Tables," which (as mentioned in a former essay) had been inscribed on plates of brass, and suspended in the forum. These slender vestiges of authentic history were manifestly insufficient to enable posterity to judge with accuracy or certainty of the progress which had been made in civilization and learning. Yet such traces as have been found, are too interesting to be wholly unnoticed, and too valuable to be entirely forgotten. It is therefore proposed in the present essay to offer such remarks on the state of religion, philosophy and literature, amongst the Romans in this early period of their history, as either these vestiges, or ancient tradition may appear to justify.

It is abundantly evident, that the *religion* of the Romans was a system of the most gross and extravagant superstition. Of this, the number and variety of their gods and goddesses, their priests and priestesses, their temples and altars, their rites and ceremonies, their auguries and divinations, furnish the most decisive proofs. The most trifling circumstances were construed by this superstitious people into favourable or adverse omens; the most ordinary undertaking called for the interference of a multitude of soothsayers and aruspices. If a military expedition were undertaken—a public assembly



convened—a plague visited the land—or if families or individuals were overtaken with sudden calamities, recourse was immediately had to the most unmeaning and even ridiculous ceremonies, by which they confidently expected to appease the wrath, and secure the favour of the deity. Nor were these superstitious practices confined to the infancy of Rome, when its inhabitants were just merging from barbarism; but they continued in full force, after many centuries had elapsed, and after the republic had grown to full vigour and maturity. They were not the superstitions of the vulgar alone, but tyrannized (if not in an equal, yet to a considerable degree,) over the minds of the wisest senators and most enlightened statesmen, at a period in which the policy of their councils, and the discipline of their armies, excited universal admiration. The most illustrious citizen of Rome, for example, did not think it beneath him to be created Dictator, in a time of pestilence, for the sole purpose of driving a nail into the wall of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; a ceremony which was considered most sacred, and never failed to propitiate the offended deity! Although it does not appear that the Romans had any oracles peculiar to themselves, (since in ordinary cases they were satisfied with auguries and sacrifices,) yet on special occasions, they were accustomed to dispatch messengers to Delphos, laden with costly gifts, to consult the celebrated oracle of Apollo in that place. Besides these more usual methods of ascertaining the will of the gods, and discovering future events, they possessed the ancient Sibylline books,\* which Tarquin was said to have pur-

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\* Though the account which has been given by ancient historians of the first discovery of these Sibylline volumes must be considered fabulous, yet as it tends to shew the credulity and superstition of the Romans, and as the books themselves (however obtained) were held for many ages in the highest veneration, it may not be improper to insert it in this place. A woman is said to have entered the palace of Tarquin with nine volumes, which she offered for sale at a very considerable price. The sum demanded having been refused her, she burnt three, and returned to offer the remaining six at the same price. This claim being rejected with scorn, she burnt three more, and still demanded

chased of a mysterious stranger, and which were never consulted but on the most solemn and urgent occasions.

A manifest difference may be observed between the developement of the intellectual faculties in Greece and in Rome, and the objects to which they were first applied. In Greece the richest fruits of taste and genius were gathered at a very early period. Long before any considerable progress had been made in civilization and the arts, poetry had attained its noblest elevation in the immortal productions of Homer, Hesiod, and others. But in Rome, philosophy took the precedence, and long retained an undisputed sovereignty, while the improvements of science, and the refinements of taste, were alike unknown. There is no reason to imagine that an individual arose, through all the centuries between the days of Romulus and those of Camillus, who cultivated the art of poetry with any degree of success; but a variety of circumstances tends to prove, that, during that period, philosophy had made considerable progress. Numa, the second of the kings of Rome, wrote several treatises on this subject; and indeed seems to have been more distinguished as a philosopher than as a prince. Pythagoras flourished in Italy about the time of the expulsion of the Tarquins, and is supposed to have been enrolled at that period amongst the Roman citizens. Though no information has been transmitted to posterity, of the establishment of schools of philosophy under distinguished leaders, the national character of the Romans, and the conduct of their most illustrious citizens in circumstances peculiarly trying, prove that a species of stoical philosophy had been imbibed by education, and was subsequently reduced to practice; a philosophy that chiefly consisted in equanimity of temper, and self-government; that condemned every violent emotion, as effeminate and

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the same money for the rest. This strange conduct at length engaged the attention of Tarquin, who, on consulting the augurs, was advised to buy them at any price. No sooner was the bargain completed, than the mysterious female vanished, nor could she ever after be discovered. The books were entrusted to the care of two officers of distinction, called *Duumviri*, who deposited them in a vault beneath the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.



degrading to the character; and that required its votaries to triumph over all the sympathies and sensibilities of their nature.

But that species of knowledge which seems most of all to have interested the Romans at this period, and which was pursued with most success, was, the *Science of Legislation*. Unlike the Athenians and Spartans, who adopted the codes devised by their respective Legislators, which they bound themselves by oath to observe without alteration or improvement, the Romans continually applied the advantages of observation and experience to the improvement of their civil and judicial code; for though the laws of Numa formed a valuable basis to their system of jurisprudence, yet even these were no longer observed than their utility and justice were demonstrable. The first collection of laws promulgated in Rome, were those compiled by Sextus Papirius, in the reign of Tarquin II., from the statutes of Romulus, Numa, and their successors. But as the abolition of royalty rendered many of these useless, it became necessary to frame a second code, which has been already mentioned, as arranged by the Decemviri in twelve tables, and collected from different parts of Greece. To the excellency of these institutes, Cicero has borne a most honourable testimony, by affirming "that they may justly be preferred to whole libraries of philosophical writings." They were divided into three classes; those which related to religion; those connected with the state; and those which maintained the rights of individuals.

In every free state, where legislative questions are openly discussed, and deliberative assemblies held, the result will be, as in the Roman republic, that distinction will be sought by the introduction of such laws, as tend either to increase the popularity of the individuals who propose them, or to gratify the wishes of the public. Hence arose the Valerian, Terentian, and Agrarian Laws, with many others, that proved perpetual sources of discord between the two contending factions. Every candidate for political influence or fame, aimed at signaling himself by carrying, either in the Senate, or in a general assembly, some regulation which should bear his name,

and for which the public should be chiefly indebted to his exertions. Such a mode of legislation, it must be confessed, was most unfavourable to peace, though it was calculated to cherish competition, and give scope to the commanding influence of superior talents.

The same causes, which conspired to form a nation of legislators, operated to produce that bold and persuasive eloquence, which commenced with the rise, and scarcely survived the fall of the Roman republic. It is true, the species of eloquence which was cultivated in the first ages, and successfully practised by Brutus, Publiola, Coriolanus, and others, was widely different from the graceful oratory of the Ciceronian age. It was not characterized by refinement of thought or elegance of expression. Little regard was probably paid to rules of criticism, and canons of taste, in the collocation of their words, the structure of their sentences, or the mode of their delivery. But if any reliance can be placed upon the testimony of ancient historians, Rome's first orators were well skilled in the art of persuasion; they knew how to command the passions and appeal to the heart; their energetic addresses seldom failed to make a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of their auditors. The senate-house and the forum were places particularly favourable to the cultivation of this talent, and the practice of pronouncing funeral orations for deceased warriors and statesmen, was calculated to cherish and dignify the rhetorical art.

But, in the judgment of this martial people, no art could be compared in importance or excellence to the *art of war*. If all others were not sacrificed to this, they were considered subordinate and far inferior. To this the Roman youth were trained from their childhood; this, they were taught to consider the chief business of life; and the surest path to preferment was that which lay through citadels and camps, and which was pursued amidst the toils and hardships of a military life. A people thus animated by a martial enthusiasm, could scarcely be expected to attain to eminence in any of the softer and more polished arts of peace. General literature, under such circumstances, could not be cultivated with



success ; nor is it surprising to find that the whole population of Rome could not furnish a sufficient number of scholars to form a deputation to the Grecian states ; but that it was necessary to engage Hermodorus of Ephesus, in the double capacity of interpreter and translator to the embassy. The rude and tasteless manner in which the city was rebuilt, and the long series of years subsequent to that event, which rolled away in ignorance and mental obscurity, sufficiently prove the low estate in which the liberal or useful arts, and every species of literature, must have remained amongst this warlike people, long after they had risen to political eminence, and even to the time of the Gallic invasion.

Collected from Plutarch. Pliny. Cicer. de Divin. et de Orat. Tit. Liv. Op. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

No objects can be imagined of greater magnitude and importance than those which the idolatrous heathen blindly pursued. They sought instruction in the will of the gods ; they devised expedients for obtaining reconciliation with that Being whom they ignorantly worshipped, and whom they were conscious of having offended ; and they were anxious to discover their future destiny. But how inadequate were the means employed to the attainment of these important ends ! How utterly impossible was it, that they should arrive at a right knowledge of the divine will, by means of auguries and oracular delusions ! How vain was their fond expectation of appeasing the wrath of an offended Deity by means of their polluted sacrifices, and costly gifts ! How fruitless were all their inquiries into futurity, whether pursued amidst the lurid gloom of Superstition, or aided by the feeble and illusive ray of false Philosophy ! No wonder that instead of coming to the knowledge of the truth, they were still more bewildered ; that “ they became vain in their imaginations and their

foolish heart was darkened." Had this knowledge been sought by humble and fervent prayer—had it been steadily pursued in the way of holy obedience—had they resigned themselves to the guidance of that light of reason and conscience, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world, they would have been convinced of the folly and delusion of their idolatrous rites, and of the necessity of divine illumination. But whatever difficulties the benighted heathen might encounter in the pursuit of this all-important knowledge, it is incumbent upon us to be unfeignedly thankful that no such difficulties are encountered by us. The light of Revelation (as far as its benign ray has extended) has effectually dispersed these dismal shades and scattered these awful delusions. The will of God respecting us is now distinctly known—the means of reconciliation are fully discovered—"life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel"—"the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." We are therefore without excuse, if we fatally err, not knowing the scriptures. Fearful will be the condemnation of those, who "hate the light, neither come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved."

How great is the difference between the best of human laws, and that divine law which is the standard of virtue and holiness! The former partake of all the imperfections which are common to our depraved nature. They are frequently accommodated to the passions and caprices of the human heart. They are partial in their influence and operation, and, as was remarkably seen in the most popular Roman laws, are sometimes the fruitful source of discord and division. But none of these characters of imperfection and inefficiency will apply to the Holy Law of God. That is a perfect transcript of the unerring will of its divine Author, and affords demonstrative evidence of the purity of His nature, and the rectitude of His government. It makes no unhallowed compromises with sinners. It sacrifices nothing to meet the wishes, or indulge the propensities of a sensual mind, but ever inculcates in the most explicit and impressive terms, the necessity of universal



holiness. Its language is, "cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

It is of importance to distinguish between the legitimate use of eloquence, and those degrading purposes to which it has frequently been applied. When this powerful engine is employed for the purpose of vindicating the truth, or counteracting oppression; when its forces are directed against all the bulwarks of tyranny, and the strong holds of profligacy and vice—its operations may be contemplated with unmingled satisfaction, and its success anticipated with ardent delight. As, for example, when Brutus represented so pathetically the injuries of Lucretia, and declaimed with such persuasive eloquence against the guilty tyrant, as to hurl him from his throne and emancipate his enslaved country, it must be admitted by all, that seldom has this formidable weapon been more honourably or more successfully wielded. But if the rhetorical art be so prostituted as to subserve the interests of private ambition, or political dissension—if those who have cultivated it with attention, use it alone as a means of inflaming the passions and blinding the judgments of their auditors—if it be, like Pandora's box, a fruitful source of confusion and every evil work—then assuredly it is to be deprecated as an engine of destruction, the more formidable on account of its attractive appearance, and insinuating mode of attack. Thus it is manifest, that the fierce contentions between the patricians and plebeians, to which frequent reference has been made in preceding essays, were both excited and cherished by the inflammatory harangues of the orators on either side, who elevated themselves at the expence of public tranquillity. Happy period, when this and every other species of hostility shall cease, and when every instrument of discord, every weapon of war, every engine of destruction, shall give place to the benignant influence and splendid triumphs of the PRINCE of PEACE!

# STUDIES IN HISTORY.

## *THE HISTORY OF ROME.*

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### BOOK II.

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FROM THE REBUILDING OF THE CITY TO THE DEATH OF  
JULIUS CÆSAR.

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#### ESSAY I.

*Victories of CAMILLUS—Condemnation of M. MANLIUS  
—First Plebeian Consul—Prætors and Curule Ædiles  
created—Death of CAMILLUS.*

FROM A. C. 387—364.

WHILST the Romans were diligently employed in re-constructing the dwellings of their forefathers, and the temples of their gods—ere yet they had obtained for their desolate families, a secure and tranquil abode—and while the unfinished capital was yet destitute of the walls and entrenchments necessary for its defence—the Volscians and Latins, judging it a favourable moment for the renewal of their ancient hostilities, made a sudden irruption into the territories of the republic. The Military Tribunes hastened to take the field with such forces as they could suddenly collect; but either through undue precipitation, or a deficiency of the science and skill requisite for the undertaking, they brought themselves and their troops into such perilous circumstances, that their destruction seemed to be inevitable. In this exigency, every eye was directed to Camillus, who, though



far advanced in years, consented again to be nominated Dictator, in a moment of the utmost alarm and danger, that he might again prove himself the Saviour of his Country. The usual success of Camillus attended him through this brilliant expedition, which commenced with the emancipation of the besieged Roman armies, and terminated in the complete overthrow of the invading foe.

No sooner were these formidable enemies subdued, than internal contentions and domestic feuds disturbed afresh the public tranquillity. This new disturbance was occasioned by the vanity and ambition of M. Manlius, to whom the Romans had been so greatly indebted for the preservation of the capitol, and who, on that account, had been treated by them with the greatest distinction. Elated with the honours he had received, he either aimed, or was suspected of aiming at the sovereignty of Rome. He resorted to the usual arts of demagogues, in order to increase his popularity; such as, the remission of debts, and the discharge of those who had contracted them, from imprisonment; the distribution of his ample wealth amongst the discontented and seditious rabble; and the revival of the proposition relative to the division of land. The Senate took alarm at these measures, they discerned their obvious tendency; and felt the necessity of counteracting them by a prompt and vigorous effort. Corn. Cossus, who was created Dictator for the express purpose of prosecuting this aspiring citizen, summoned Manlius before him, and committed him to prison, as an enemy to the liberties of Rome. But the Senate, through fear of the people, who at that time warmly espoused his cause, consented to his liberation, as soon as the dictatorship of Cossus had expired.

After his imprisonment, the conduct of Manlius became more seditious and dangerous than before. By degrees he threw aside the mask, and assumed a tone so imperious and unguarded, that the common people who had almost idolized, began to suspect him of an intention to subvert the constitution. And now the Tribunes of the people, in their turn, cited him before them, through

whose influence he was condemned to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock; that rock which he had once so bravely defended, and on the brow of which stood the capitol. It was also decreed, that his stately mansion, which had been recently erected on the same hill at the public expence, should be utterly demolished; and that no Roman should be permitted in future to bear his name. Yet scarcely was this rigorous sentence executed, before the fickle populace began to regret his loss, and ascribed a pestilence, which raged about that time, to the displeasure of the gods at his death.

Shortly after this event, a succession of important changes took place in the commonwealth, all of which grew out of a very trifling incident. M. Fabius Ambustus had two daughters, the elder of whom was married to S. Sulpicius, a distinguished patrician, at that time one of the Military Tribunes; and the younger was married to C. Licinius Stolo, an opulent plebeian. When, on one occasion, the wife of Licinius was visiting her elder sister, she was alarmed by the noise of the lictors, who, as usual, thundered at the door to announce the arrival of the chief magistrate. The wife of Sulpicius smiled at the terrors of her plebeian sister, and ascribed them to her ignorance of the honours usually paid to persons of patrician, and especially of consular rank. This explanation, so mortifying to the vanity of the younger, but more opulent sister, stung her to the quick. From that moment a deep melancholy took possession of her mind, which admitted of no relief, till its cause was removed, by the repeal of the law which excluded plebeians from the consulship. This was not accomplished without great difficulty, and after several years of warm discussion and violent agitation. At length however the point was carried, and Sextius, a plebeian youth of distinguished talents and liberal fortune, who had taken a most active part in the contest, was chosen the first plebeian Consul. Reluctant as the Patricians were to concede to the inferior order of their fellow-citizens the desired boon, its advantages were soon apparent in the augmented energy of the republic. The eligibility of all classes of Roman citizens to the



highest offices in the state, and the removal of the invidious distinctions which had so long separated those of plebeian, from those of patrician rank, tended greatly to produce that vigour and prosperity which characterized the future ages of the commonwealth. About the same time two other laws were introduced, for which the Tribunes of the people had long and strenuously contended; the one was intended to prevent usury by regulating the interest of money, and the other related to the division of the conquered lands. The latter of these, which prohibited a Roman citizen from possessing more than 500 acres, was commonly called the *Licinian Law*; and C. Licinius Stolo, who introduced it, was the first that incurred its penalties.

The enactment of these popular laws was owing principally to the influence and conciliatory counsels of Camillus, who sincerely lamented the continuance of civil dissension, and, after having greatly contributed to the restoration of peace, celebrated its return by dedicating a temple to Concord. In return for these important concessions, Camillus obtained the consent of the people to the creation of two new offices, which should exclusively belong to Patricians, under the titles of *Prætors* and *Curule Ædiles*.\* The Prætor was a species of police magistrate, authorized to try causes, hear complaints, and settle differences that arose within the city. He was attended on all occasions by two lictors, and considered next in rank to the Consuls. The Curule Ædiles were charged with the superintendence of all public entertainments, which had become exceedingly numerous, and called for the constant interference of the civil power. The Patricians did not, however, long retain the exclusive privilege of holding these offices; for

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\* These officers were entitled *Curule Ædiles*, to distinguish them from those Ædiles, which have been mentioned in a former essay, who were of plebeian rank, and appointed to assist the Tribunes of the people in the execution of their office. They were called *Curule*, from the circumstance of their being carried about, as were also the Prætors and Consuls, in a sort of ivory chair, which was usually known by the name of the "Curule chair."

after a very few years, these, as well as all other dignities, whether legislative or executive, civil or religious, were equally accessible to all classes of Roman citizens. These domestic arrangements took place about the time in which Camillus was elevated a fourth time to the office of Dictator, and at the age of fourscore obtained a complete victory over the Gauls, who had again advanced toward Rome.

From this period, the republic enjoyed a state of tranquillity, during several years, which was only interrupted by a dreadful plague, that swept away many distinguished citizens, and, amongst the rest, the great Camillus himself, to whom more than to any other individual, Rome was indebted for her national existence. The protracted life of this justly celebrated Roman, was wholly devoted to disinterested and patriotic exertions, which have seldom been equalled, and never excelled. ‘Though cut off by a pestilence,’ Plutarch justly remarks, ‘that his death could not be considered premature, whether estimated by the years he lived, or the distinguished glory he acquired.’ Tempestuous as was the political sea which he was called to navigate, and shattered the bark at whose helm he presided, he steered with such consummate skill, that neither the vessel nor his own reputation, which constituted a valuable part of the freight, suffered any injury. Nor was he called to quit the helm, till he had the satisfaction to see it tranquilly gliding into the desired haven.

Plut. in vit. Camill. Liv. lib. 5 et 6.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

Every thing conspires to teach us that “this is not our rest.” In vain shall we have perused the records of antiquity if we do not learn from them, that human life is a mixture of toils and hazards, labours and dangers. As in the rebuilding of Rome, the inhabitants were



constrained to leave their houses and temples unfinished, and go forth to meet an implacable foe; or as, after the Babylonish captivity, the Jews who had been permitted to return to their own land, “with one hand wrought in the work” of building the walls of their demolished city, and “with the other, held a weapon of war,”—so does it become us, whilst engaged in necessary duties and useful labours, to be prepared for the assault of our spiritual adversaries—to be on our guard against temptation—to combine prudence with zeal, and vigilance with activity.

The want of these united qualities had nearly proved fatal to the Romans. The Military Tribunes, to whom their legions were entrusted, were not less zealous or less prompt in their exertions than Camillus; but they were rash, impetuous, and self-confident. They rushed, like a headstrong courser, into dangers from which they were unable to extricate themselves. True wisdom discovers itself not only in pursuing the best of objects, but in choosing the most prudent and effectual means, or, according to the advice of our Saviour, “in sitting down first, and counting the cost.”

The elevation and fall of Manlius may serve to remind us—if indeed we need to be reminded of truths so self-evident—that there are few who can bear sudden and signal prosperity, and that those who have walked securely and honourably in the lowly vale of life, are in danger of becoming dizzy, when suddenly transported to the pinnacle of fame. Never have we greater cause for watchfulness and prayer, than when an unexpected train of events has led to a remarkable change of condition, and brought us into a sphere of action, or field of temptation, to which we have hitherto been strangers. Then especially, if we would retain our integrity, we must “keep our hearts with all diligence,” and watch over ourselves with a godly jealousy.

How persevering are the vain and ambitious in their pursuit of worldly honours! Frequent disappointments and the most strenuous opposition do not discourage them—months and years consumed in an apparently unsuccessful struggle cannot deter them from their purpose—

nor do they esteem the most painful sacrifices too great, so that the object of their ambition be ultimately attained. Would to God that an equal degree of firm and persevering industry were exhibited by the candidates for a celestial crown, in the pursuit of those immortal honours to which they are encouraged to aspire! Such invincible perseverance directed towards spiritual objects could not fail to prove ultimately successful, whatever discouragements or difficulties might intervene. "Let us then hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering," assured that, in the issue, we shall "receive the end of that faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Finally, It is matter of thankfulness, that whatever invidious, or, in some cases, necessary distinctions may be made amongst men, with God there is no respect of persons. Those of plebeian and those of patrician rank are alike permitted to aspire to the highest dignities in His kingdom. The path to glory, honour, and immortality, is equally accessible to all conditions of men. None are excluded from it but those who, by their wilful impenitence, exclude themselves. Whatever barriers human pride or human policy may place around the coveted dignities of this world, thanks be to God! the blessings of his grace are freely dispensed. All are invited—all are commanded—without reserve or distinction, to come and receive, from his unmerited bounty, honours which will bloom for ever, and enjoyments which Eternity cannot exhaust.

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## ESSAY II.

### *On the Samnite War.*

FROM A. C. 343 TO A. C. 280.

THE contagious disease which carried off Camillus, continued to rage with great violence, during several years subsequent to that event. In vain were expedients



devised by the superstitious multitude, and their no less superstitious rulers, to appease the offended deities of Rome, to whose displeasure they ascribed their present calamities. Though the ancient rite of the *Lectisternium* was revived on this occasion, and celebrated with the most solemn pomp—though scenic representations were now for the first time exhibited in honour of the gods—and though, as a last resource, a Dictator was created for the sole purpose of driving a nail into the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus—the pestilence still raged, and desolated the city. About the same time, the terrors of the people were augmented by an earthquake, which caused the sudden appearance of a wide and deep chasm in the midst of the forum. Fruitless attempts were made to fill up this gulph; the augurs were consulted on the occasion; and it is even said, that M. Curtius, a noble Roman youth, mounted a richly caparisoned charger, and precipitated himself into the abyss. The deluded populace expressed their admiration of his piety and self-devotion, by throwing in after him such quantities of corn, fruits, and every other kind of oblation, that at length the chasm was filled up, and public tranquillity restored.

L. Manlius, who had been created Dictator, was too ambitious to be satisfied that his high office should be signalized by nothing but the performance of a sacred rite. Instead of resigning the dictatorship, when that rite was performed, he projected a war with the Hernici, and began to levy troops for that purpose; but was frustrated in his design, and obliged to abdicate his office, by the determined opposition of the Tribunes. Scarcely had he retired from the honourable station, to which his country had called him, when the Tribunes commenced a prosecution against him for injustice and cruelty to his son, T. Manlius, whom, on account of supposed intellectual weakness and other natural defects, the Dictator had secluded from public notice, and trained to agricultural occupations. But no sooner was this youth informed of the nature of the accusation, and of his father's danger, than he hastened to Rome, rushed into the tribune's apartment, and at the point of the sword, constrained him solemnly to swear that he would abandon the unjust pro-

secution. This generous act was highly applauded by the Romans, amongst whom filial piety was accounted a virtue of the first order. From this period, the younger Manlius, notwithstanding his natural infirmities, became a distinguished character, and was afterwards no less remarkable for his military prowess, than he had been for his filial affection.

After several years had elapsed, which were chiefly spent in successful conflicts with some of the lesser Italian states, a war broke out which proved more formidable than any in which the Romans had yet been engaged. The Samnites, a warlike people, who inhabited an extensive and mountainous tract of territory extending from Latium to Apulia, according to the custom of those times, attacked their weaker neighbours, the Sidicini. The latter solicited aid from the Campanians, an opulent and luxurious people in their vicinity, who had been little accustomed to military labours and dangers. The Campanians, without staying to count the cost, espoused the cause of their oppressed neighbours, and the Samnites, tempted by the wealth and weakness of their new adversaries, withdrew their troops from the territories of the Sidicini, and poured them into the fruitful plains of Campania. Wholly unprepared for so arduous a conflict, the Campanians were quickly reduced to the utmost extremity. In their distress, they dispatched ambassadors to Rome, who were empowered not only to solicit immediate succours in the most importunate manner, but, in case of refusal, were authorized formally to surrender the magnificent city of Capua, and the whole province of Campania, to the Roman commonwealth, as its legitimate and exclusive property.

This was a proposal far too gratifying to Roman ambition to be refused, though a compliance would of necessity involve them in a war with a people whose military character they well knew, and with whom they had previously concluded a treaty of alliance. In vain did they assure the Samnites that Campania was no longer an independent state, but that it now formed a province of their republic; and equally vain were the remonstrances of the latter against the craft, the injustice,



the treachery of their former allies. An appeal was made to arms, which continued with little intermission upwards of forty years. During this long and severe contest, the Romans met with a greater variety of disasters, than at any former period of their history. Yet their valour and skill finally triumphed over all, and enabled them not only to obtain reparation for the disgrace they had repeatedly sustained during the conflict, but also to dictate a peace on their own terms. Instead of attempting a circumstantial detail of the transactions of this war, which would be both uninteresting and useless, two or three incidents will be selected, which occurred during that period, tending to illustrate the character and principles of the combatants, and calculated to convey moral instruction.

Soon after the commencement of the war, several legions of Roman soldiers, which had wintered in the wealthy city of Capua, were detected in a conspiracy to seize that city, expel its inhabitants, throw off the yoke of subordination, and become their own masters. In so short a period had they become enervated by indulgence, and formed to the most irregular and licentious habits, in consequence of having associated with an effeminate and luxurious people. The Roman Consul, who commanded them, observed with alarm the depravation of their manners, and their growing neglect of military discipline. He had recourse first to gentler, and then to severer measures, but all were ineffectual to correct the evil, and restore subordination. The mutineers deserted their standards, chose their own leader, and marched towards Rome in a tumultuous body. Alarmed at the approach of this rebellious army, the Roman citizens entreated the Consuls instantly to nominate a Dictator. Valerius Corvus, a man greatly beloved both by the army and the people, was appointed to that office, whose popularity and address saved his country from the horrors of a civil war, when that calamity seemed inevitable. By soothing the passions of the malcontents, and making some trifling concessions in their favour, he induced them to return to their allegiance, and renew their ancient discipline.

During one of the truces concluded with the Samnites in the course of this war, the Latins and Campanians revolted, and it was thought necessary to send both the Roman Consuls, Manlius and Decius, at the head of a veteran army, to reduce them to subjection. Before the armies engaged, the aruspices were, as usual, consulted, who intimated that the victory would be gained by that army, whose general should voluntarily devote himself to death. It was therefore agreed by the Consuls, that if either wing of the army should be so pressed by the enemy as to be in danger of defeat, its commander should, with all due religious solemnities, sacrifice himself for his country. Decius, who commanded the left wing, in the midst of the action, finding himself unable to maintain his ground, called for the Pontifex, whose office it was to perform the ceremony of consecration, and having submitted to the customary rites, plunged into the thickest of the enemy's ranks, amongst which he fell, covered with numberless wounds. Intelligence of this patriotic, and, as they imagined, pious action, quickly circulated through both armies, and served to heighten the enthusiasm of the one, and depress the spirits of the other. The Romans were encouraged by it to renew the charge, and the Latins, unnerved and disarmed by their superstitious fear, fled before them. The Roman historians, who have recorded this event, do not hesitate to ascribe this victory solely to the piety and self-devotion of Decius; but, even from their statement, it is evident, that to the generalship of Manlius, and the invincible bravery of his troops, Rome was indebted for this new triumph over her enemies.

In a more advanced stage of the Samnite war, a disaster befel the Roman army, under Posthumius, which tarnished all their former glory. Pontius, the Samnite general, contrived to entrap the Roman Consul and his whole army in the Caudine straits; a place entirely surrounded by mountains, in all whose defiles, Pontius had stationed detachments of his army. Hemmed in on every side, and hopeless of escape, the Romans had no alternative but to submit to the disgraceful conditions imposed upon them by the besieging army. These



were, that the Consul and his army should pass under the yoke in token of subjection; that after having submitted to this degrading requisition, they should march back to Rome, deprived of their arms and of their upper garment; and that all the Romans and their colonies should be expelled from Samnium. In imposing these conditions, so repulsive to a high-spirited nation like the Romans, Pontius had acted in opposition to the counsel of his more experienced father, who had advised him, either to dismiss them honourably, or to put them to the sword. The event proved, that that advice was founded in wisdom, for the Romans, irritated but unsubdued, quickly returned to the charge with augmented forces and more inveterate enmity, resolved to take ample vengeance on the Samnites for the indignity they had suffered. A series of sanguinary battles were fought, and a succession of splendid victories obtained, by which the disgrace which had attached to the Roman arms was wiped off, and the pride of Samnium effectually humbled.

Liv. Hist. lib. 7—9. Vell. Patere. lib. 1. Valer. Maxim. Aurel. Vict. Eutrop. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

How strangely perverted were the understandings of these idolaters, who imagined that the wrath of an offended Deity might be averted by rites so frivolous and impure, as those which have been adverted to in the preceding narrative. Yet their perversion of mind is not less strange, and far more inexcusable, who, living under a brighter dispensation, and enjoying superior privileges, remain willingly ignorant of the means of reconciliation and pardon; and flatter themselves that the punishment of sin may be avoided, and the divine favour obtained, by submitting to a course of religious ceremonies, or by the external observance of some relative duties. That some propitiatory sacrifice was necessary to the remission

of sins, even the most benighted heathen seem to have discerned; and that a sacrifice of superior dignity to those which were commonly offered, would be acceptable to God, was generally believed. Hence arose the self-dedication of Curtius and Decius, and many others who devoted themselves to death, that they might appease the anger, or merit the favour of the gods. But alas! the Great Sacrifice for sin they knew not! As yet they were unacquainted with the only "name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved." Thanks be to God! our faith is directed to the atoning Saviour, who filled up the yawning gulph of divine vengeance, by precipitating himself into that dreadful abyss; and who saved, not a few individuals merely, but a perishing world from destruction, by the voluntary surrender of his life.

From the conduct of the younger Manlius towards his parent when falsely accused, we may learn the duty of vindicating injured innocence, and endeavouring to wipe off reproach, especially from those who have the strongest claim upon our affections. We are not indeed, like him, to do this at the point of the sword; unlawful and violent measures are not to be resorted to, even in extreme cases; but all that persuasion, entreaty, or legitimate force can effect, ought to be exerted with the utmost diligence in order to cover the traducer with shame, and ward off from those who are unjustly aspersed the envenomed shafts of calumny.

The revolt of the Campanian legions exhibits to posterity another instance of the mischievous consequences of self-indulgence, and the contaminating influence of immoral associates. How soon were the strong bonds of military discipline and all the restraints of a Roman education relaxed and broken asunder, amidst the dissipated scenes of the luxurious capital of Campania. It is thus that habits of sensual indulgence, and above all, licentious companions, have frequently broken down in a short time, the strongest barriers of moral discipline and religious education, and transformed a hopeful youth into an abandoned profligate. Yet if any have become the victims of temptation either through their own in-



cautiousness, or the subtlety of their enemies, let them not resign themselves to despair. Let them remember that though the Romans were inveigled into the Caudine straits, and brought under a temporary yoke, yet, when escaped from that snare they returned to the charge, and, by new conflicts, and victories, wiped off the disgrace, and vanquished their foes. So let those who have fallen into the snare of Satan or the world, arise and shake themselves from the dust—let them arm themselves afresh for the combat—let them seek new succours from above—again let them “go forth in the strength of the Lord God;”—and they may rest assured, “for their shame they shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.”

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## ESSAY III.

*On the Tarentine war, and the invasion of Italy by  
PYRRHUS, king of Epirus.*

FROM A. C. 280—274.

HITHERTO the Romans had contended with nations, which, though frequently superior in numbers, and equal in courage, were far inferior to themselves in military arts and discipline. It is therefore not surprising, that in the end they uniformly proved victorious, and that every new contest but tended to enlarge their territory and augment their power. But the case was now far different. The Tarentine war brought them into contact with the best disciplined troops, commanded by the most distinguished warrior of that, or perhaps any other age. They were under the necessity too of encountering this formidable enemy, while yet the Samnite war continued to rage with great violence. Yet this little republic, like a well-constructed vessel, rose buoyant upon the billows of political discord, and pursued her

majestic course amidst the tempest of hostile invasion ; or, like the mountain oak, struck deeper her roots, and more widely expanded her branches, the more rudely she was assailed by the wintry blast.

The Tarentines were a colony of degenerate Spartans, who, far from retaining any of the austere and self-denying habits of their Grecian ancestors, resigned themselves to every species of luxury and dissipation. They were accustomed to devote all their hours of leisure to public amusements, and the unrestrained indulgence of their sensual appetites. It was in one of these seasons of riotous festivity, that some small Roman vessels were driven by stress of weather into the port of Tarentum, and the mariners were immediately assailed by the inebriated populace with reproaches, menaces, and ultimately, with unprovoked violence. As several Roman citizens were killed in this affray, the Senate sent a deputation to demand satisfaction, or, in case of refusal, to declare war. But this proud commercial city, unconscious of its weakness, or relying upon its foreign resources, treated the ambassadors with the grossest indignity, and defied all the legions of the Republic. Soon however the Tarèntines had reason to repent of their rashness, for a Roman army was sent under the command of Æmilius, one of the Consuls for that year, with orders to ravage their territories, and burn up their cities and villages. It was now too late to seek reconciliation—they were alike unprepared for assault or defence—the Romans, having desolated their country, were pressing forward to lay siege to their capital—and no alternative remained, but to place themselves under the powerful protection of PYRRHUS, the warlike king of Epirus.

Pyrrhus, who had attentively studied the character, and emulated the glory of Alexander of Macedon, listened with eagerness to a proposal which gratified his ambition, and would lead, as he fondly imagined, to conquests as splendid in the West, as those by which the Macedonian Hero had been distinguished in the East. Already he pictured to his imagination the whole of Italy, Sicily, and the Carthaginian empire, subdued by



his arms, and annexed to his hereditary kingdom. In the midst of these visionary schemes, a confidential friend, whom he had wisely selected as his official adviser, ventured to oppose his inclinations, and endeavoured to dissuade him from undertaking so chimerical an expedition. This was the celebrated Cyneas, who had been a disciple of Demosthenes, and had so greatly profited by the instructions of that far-famed orator, that Pyrrhus used to say, "he had won more cities by the eloquence of Cyneas than by his own sword." This philosophical orator, in a long discourse with his sovereign, endeavoured to convince him, that if all his projects should be realized, he would still be as far as ever from satisfaction and rest. But Pyrrhus was deaf to the wise, though unwelcome counsels of his friend. He obstinately persisted in his resolution of invading Italy, and lost no time in collecting and embarking a numerous army, the greater part of which was dispersed by storms and adverse winds before it reached the Italian coast. The king of Epirus himself escaped with great difficulty, attended by a comparatively small number of veteran troops, who, having braved the dangers of the deep, arrived at Tarentum, where he had been anxiously expected, and into whose citadel his soldiers were joyfully admitted.

As soon as his reinforcements arrived, Pyrrhus took the field, and marched towards Lucania, where the Roman Consul Lævinus awaited him, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army. Pyrrhus offered him peace, but the Consul answered in the tone of defiance, that "he neither acknowledged the king of Epirus as an arbitrator, nor feared him as an enemy." In several of the first encounters, the Romans were defeated with great loss, partly owing to their ignorance of the Grecian modes of warfare, and partly to the terror inspired by the armed elephants, which Pyrrhus had brought with him, and successfully employed in breaking the enemy's ranks. Yet in these engagements such proofs had been given of the invincible bravery of the Romans, that Pyrrhus was compelled to acknowledge, that "a few such victories would be his ruin," and that "with such troops he should not despair of conquering the world." He now

became more anxious than before to save his reputation by concluding an honourable peace with a people, whom, he foresaw, he should never be able to subdue. Cyneas, the philosopher, was dispatched to Rome for this purpose, who exhausted all his diplomatic arts and all the powers of his eloquence in a fruitless attempt to negotiate. In vain did he profusely scatter the costly gifts with which he was laden, amongst the Roman matrons; and equally vain were his attempts, to corrupt the most distinguished Senators by flattering promises, and the offer of magnificent presents. The firm and dignified answer given to all his overtures, was, "that the Romans could enter into no treaty with Pyrrhus, till he had withdrawn his troops from Italy." The Grecian ambassador returned to his master, filled indeed with admiration of the dignity of the Roman character, but completely foiled in the object of his embassy. When his sovereign inquired, what opinion he had formed of the city and senate, he replied that, "to him Rome appeared as a sacred temple, and the Senate an assembly of kings."

Notwithstanding the failure of this embassy, Pyrrhus attempted to renew the negotiation, when Fabricius arrived at his camp, charged with a message from the Senate, relative to an exchange of prisoners. In several conferences with this distinguished Roman, the king of Epirus had recourse to every art of seduction, which in former cases he had employed with success. He attempted at one time to dazzle him with the splendour and pomp of royalty; and at another, to terrify him with an exaggerated statement of his military resources. Offers of great wealth and high distinction were repeatedly made by Pyrrhus, and indignantly spurned by the Roman ambassador. Notwithstanding the poverty of Fabricius, his fidelity was impregnable; neither flatteries, nor promises, nor the most assiduous attentions of the prince and his courtiers, could move him from his purpose. He assured the king, that he valued a mind free from self-reproach, and an untarnished reputation, more highly than all the treasures and honours of the universe; and that he was not the less esteemed by his



countrymen, or less qualified for the most important stations in the republic, on account of the poverty and apparent meanness of his condition.

Soon after this interview, Fabricius received a letter from the king's physician, offering to administer poison to Pyrrhus, and thus at once terminate the war, if a suitable reward were given him. But Fabricius and his colleague Æmilius, not only rejected the proposal with indignation, but instantly communicated the intelligence of the plot to the king, by an Epirot prisoner, who was released for that purpose. So deeply was Pyrrhus impressed with the generosity of this act, that he is said to have exclaimed, "It were as easy to turn the sun from its course, as to draw Fabricius from the path of honour and virtue." This circumstance led to an interchange of good offices, which it is pleasing to contemplate amidst the distressing details of war. All the Roman prisoners were sent home without ransom, and an equal number of Samnites and Tarentines, who were the allies of Pyrrhus, were liberated by the Romans.

But though the first encounters of the Romans with the veteran troops of Greece proved unsuccessful, they became by degrees better acquainted with the military tactics of their adversaries, and in many instances adopted them in preference to their own. They learned to model and intrench their camps after the example of Pyrrhus, who was considered a perfect master in that important branch of military science. Thus instructed by their enemies themselves, they advanced step by step, till they were at length enabled to overthrow the Epirots in a general engagement, and oblige their renowned leader to return with precipitation, leaving only a garrison for the defence of the city of Tarentum.\* This signal victory, so honourable to the Roman arms, and so important in its consequences, was obtained by Curius Dentatus, who, at the close of the war, entered the city in triumph, laden with the magnificent spoils of the vanquished, and greeted with the acclamations of his fellow-

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\* For a brief statement of the subsequent exploits and death of this military adventurer, see Hist. of Greece. Book III. Essay 11.

citizens. Arduous as the contest had been, the Romans considered themselves amply rewarded in having expelled from Italy the first warrior of the age, after having annihilated his army; and in having reduced to subjection the whole Italian peninsula.

Plut. in vit. Pyrrh. Polyb. lib. 1 et 2. Justin. Flor. Valer. Maxim. Eutrop. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

From the sketch which has been given of the perpetual hostilities carried on by the Romans, it must be obvious to every reader, that war was the element in which that people most delighted. It formed both their business and their pleasure. A proficiency in the military art was esteemed by them the perfection of knowledge. Every other pursuit or attainment was considered as of little value compared with this. For this they were content to sacrifice all the advantages of commerce, and all the distinctions of science and philosophy. A martial spirit seems to have pervaded the whole social body from the Dictators and Consuls, down to the lowest plebeian. It was transmitted from father to son through every succeeding generation, and formed the principal feature of their national character, during a long series of ages. This predisposition to war, which was acquired by education and strengthened by habit, gave a tone of sternness and severity to their minds, and of roughness, bordering on ferocity, to their manners. They despised the milder qualities of a susceptible heart as proofs of effeminacy and weakness, whilst the more rigid virtues, (if virtues they can be called,) were those alone which they admired and cultivated. And such must ever be the influence of a similar temper on the character both of individuals and nations. It must generate in a greater or less degree, a ferocity of manners, and a moral insensibility to the wants and miseries of mankind.

It were well for the human race, if the considerations



which were so eloquently urged by Cyneas upon the attention of his royal master, had been practically regarded both by princes and their subjects. How much blood might have been spared, and how many public calamities avoided, if those who engage in military enterprizes were first to inquire, whether their labours and dangers would lead to satisfaction and contentment of mind, or whether it is not more probable that success would heighten, rather than allay the fever of their ambition! Who can doubt that if Pyrrhus had realized his wildest schemes—if, instead of encountering disgrace, he had added the conquest of Sicily to that of Italy, and annexed Gaul or Carthage to both, he would have been still an utter stranger to tranquillity of mind, and yet more incapable than before of enjoying repose? The restless ambition of the warrior is as insatiable, as the degrading avarice of the miser; for as the latter still cries, “give, give,” after having realized the amplest wealth; so the former presses on from conquest to conquest with unabated ardour, after having obtained the most splendid triumphs.

How many, like Pyrrhus, are deaf to the counsels of wisdom! How many listen to the dictates of passion, in preference to those of reason, and rush with blind impetuosity into dangers which that inward monitor would have enabled them to avoid, if they had resigned themselves to her guidance. In the sanguine period of youth, there is much to be apprehended from this quarter; for it is then that hope paints the most enchanting visions of futurity; the passions are then most clamorous and ungovernable; whilst reason and experience are yet immature and defective. How valuable, in such an hour of danger, is that divine Counsellor, who warns them of every danger, and “guides their feet into the way of peace.”

There is much in the character of Fabricius both to admire and imitate. His incorruptible fidelity,—his integrity and uprightness in the midst of seductions and temptations,—his generosity to an adversary whose life was in his power,—these, and many other excellent qualities which met in this illustrious Roman, deserve to

be studied and imitated by posterity. They are flowers not unworthy to be transplanted into a christian soil. Who does not feel that even the poverty of Fabricius was more dignified than all the royal magnificence of Pyrrhus; and that the martial fame of a hero, who was esteemed the greatest captain of his age, sinks into utter insignificance, when contrasted with the unyielding virtue, and moral excellence of his Roman antagonist? What a memorable testimony was extorted from the lips of an enemy by his invincible fidelity. "This is that Fabricius, whom it is more difficult to turn from the paths of virtue, than to divert the sun from his course." Exaggerated as was this statement, made under the warm influence of gratitude, it proves that it is possible, by acts of kindness and generosity, to melt the heart of an enemy, and transform his hatred into admiration and esteem. So should it be our concern to constrain the adversaries of the Gospel to bear a reluctant, but decided testimony to the sincerity of our profession, and the steadfastness of our obedience. So solicitous should we be to maintain an undeviating course of piety and holiness, that others, "seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven."

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## ESSAY IV.

### *The first Punic War.*

BEGAN A. C. 263.    ENDED A. C. 240.

THE æra of Roman History to which the present essay refers, was on many accounts highly important. It was then that the Romans entered upon that splendid career of foreign conquests, which they steadily pursued, till almost the whole world submitted to their arms. Then first they directed their attention to naval affairs, in which they afterwards proved as successful, as they had long been in military expeditions. But especially, it was



then that the memorable struggle commenced between the rival republics of Rome and Carthage, which ended in the total destruction of the latter. Before the principal events of this ruinous contest are narrated, it may not be improper to furnish the juvenile reader with a sketch of the origin and early history of the Carthaginians.

Carthage was a Tyrian colony, supposed to have been planted by Elissa or Dido, a princess of Tyre, who fled from the cruelty of her brother Pygmalion, by whom her husband had been murdered, and her own life threatened. Attended by a numerous retinue of friends and followers, who had acquired great wealth by commerce, she sailed in quest of a more secure and peaceful abode. The peninsula on which the city of Carthage afterward stood, seemed most inviting to this mercantile colony, on account of its commercial facilities. Here therefore they resolved to settle, to build a city, and construct a capacious harbour. Nurtured by a free and equitable government, which Aristotle pronounced one of the most perfect the world had ever seen,—unchecked by foreign wars or intestine commotions,—and, after the destruction of Tyre, by Alexander,\* commanding the commerce of the world,—this colony flourished so remarkably, that at the time of the first Punic war, it is said to have included in its dominion 300 of the smaller cities of Africa, besides the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and a considerable part of Spain. But increasing wealth and uninterrupted prosperity gradually sapped the foundations of this celebrated commonwealth, and rendered it proverbially venal, perfidious, and corrupt.

The Romans had, at several periods, concluded treaties of alliance with their Carthaginian neighbours. The earliest on record was that which Polybius mentions, as having taken place during the consulate of Junius Brutus, the terms of which are sufficient to prove the superiority of the Carthaginians at that period, and their undisputed sovereignty of the seas. A subsequent

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\* Hist. of Greece. Book III. Essay 9.

treaty confined the commerce of the Romans within narrower limits, and extended the mercantile advantages of Carthage and her dependencies. These encroachments were not contemplated by the Romans with indifference. Though they had not as yet acquired sufficient strength to contend with this formidable rival, they watched her motions with the most jealous eye, and formed the secret determination of embracing the earliest opportunity to humble the pride of Carthage.

This desired opportunity at length presented itself. In consequence of the termination of the Samnite and Tarentine wars, and the return of Pyrrhus to his hereditary dominions, Rome found herself the undisputed mistress of Italy, without an enemy with whom to contend, or an enterprise in which to employ her numerous legions. When princes or states have resolved on hostilities, pretexts for war are seldom wanting. In the present instance, the invitation of a band of robbers, who had seized upon Messina in Sicily, and erected the standard of rebellion against their lawful sovereign, was deemed by the Romans a sufficient excuse for sending thither an army, under the command of Appius Claudius. On the other hand, it had long been a favourite object of the Carthaginians to obtain possession of the whole of that fertile island, which contained so many convenient harbours, and possessed such valuable internal resources. The unsettled state of the island—an application made by Hiero, king of Syracuse, for some Carthaginian troops to assist him in reducing the insurgents—and the actual possession of several fortified stations on its coast—all seemed to justify the interference of Carthage in this quarrel, and determined the Senate to dispatch thither a fleet and army, under the command of Hanno, and Hannibal the elder. For a short time the contest was carried on in Sicily with various success, but the Romans soon resolved on the more hazardous, but decisive measure of transferring the seat of war to Africa.

Previously to the execution of this design, and indeed before they could hope to succeed in the invasion of Sicily, it was obviously necessary that the Romans



should be in possession of a fleet capable of contending with the maritime forces of Carthage. To this object therefore they applied themselves with the utmost diligence, and taking as their model, a Carthaginian galley, which had been stranded on the coast of Italy, fitted out, in the space of two months, a fleet consisting of 100 *quinqueremes* or large galleys, which were managed by five tiers of rowers, and 20 *triremes*, or smaller vessels, which admitted but of three. No sooner was this naval armament completed, than the Consuls Cornelius and Duilius, sailed to the coast of Sicily. Cornelius, deceived by false intelligence, fell into a snare; and both himself and the detachment of the fleet under his command were taken by the enemy; but Duilius obtained an ample reparation for this loss, by gaining a complete victory over a Carthaginian fleet, which was far superior in numbers, and commanded by one of their ablest officers. The result of this engagement was, the capture of upwards of 80 Carthaginian galleys, and a great number of prisoners, besides the confidence with which it inspired the Romans in their future naval encounters. The joy of the Romans on receiving the unexpected intelligence of this first maritime victory was excessive, and, as it was chiefly to be attributed to the personal skill and bravery of Duilius, who had invented a machine with which to grapple and board the enemies' vessels, the highest honours were conferred on him, and a most splendid triumph awaited him on his return. Hannibal, on the contrary, the unsuccessful Carthaginian admiral, was deprived of his office, and narrowly escaped with his life.

The consequences of the naval victory of Duilius, were far greater than had been anticipated. Corsica, Sardinia, and several Sicilian cities, which had previously belonged to the Carthaginians, now surrendered to the Romans. Flushed with these successes, the Roman Senate determined to enter without delay upon the execution of their hazardous design of invading Carthage. In pursuance of this object, both the Consuls passed over into Africa, and having defeated a Carthaginian squadron in their passage, landed their troops at Clupea,

whose harbour afforded an excellent shelter to the dismantled fleet. The military career of Regulus, (to whom, as the most skilful general, this enterprise was chiefly confided,) was at first most splendid and successful. Eighty Carthaginian cities surrendered to his victorious regions. Amongst the fortified places of which he obtained possession, was Utica, a city next in power and wealth to Carthage herself, and not many miles distant. Regulus now approached the capital, and was preparing to besiege it, when Xanthippus, a Lacedæmonian general, arrived at the head of a considerable body of Grecian mercenaries. To him the supreme command of all the Carthaginian forces was given, and this confidence was well repaid by the skill and talents of the Spartan chief. He attacked and conquered the Roman army, of which scarcely two thousand escaped from slaughter or captivity. Amongst the prisoners taken in this memorable engagement was Regulus himself, who was led in triumph through the streets of Carthage. For a time, the gratitude of the Carthaginians to Xanthippus for having delivered them from the horrors of a protracted siege, was expressed in the strongest terms; but soon their gratitude was turned to envy, which began to discover itself so openly, that the Lacedæmonian deemed it prudent to resign his command, and return home. It is even said, that this ungrateful people, who owed to him their very existence, contrived privately to assassinate their deliverer before he arrived at Sparta.

The calamity which had befallen the Romans, instead of discouraging, prompted them to new and yet greater exertions. A larger fleet and more powerful army was equipped and sent first to Sicily, with instructions to pass over to Africa, if it were deemed advisable. And now the tide of success turned against the Carthaginians. They were repeatedly defeated both by sea and land, and were at length induced to send an embassy to solicit peace. Amongst these was Regulus, who was now liberated, after several years of rigorous imprisonment, under a pledge that if peace were not concluded, he should return to his former state of captivity. They did not doubt that the hardships he had endured, and the



apprehension of their renewal, would lead him to exert himself to the utmost. But to the surprise of the ambassadors, on his arrival in Italy, he refused to enter the city, to meet the caresses of his wife and children, or to accept of the congratulations of the senators; and, when his opinion was asked, used every possible argument to prevail upon his countrymen to persist in the war, assuring them of ultimate and complete success. At his instigation the treaty was broken off, and the ambassadors were dismissed; and, when his weeping relatives and even the ministers of religion advised him to continue in Rome, assuring him that an oath extorted by an enemy was not binding, he rejected the proposal with indignation, and adhered to his resolution of returning to Carthage. "I well know," exclaimed this patriotic and conscientious Roman, "what tortures await me on my arrival there, but I fear less the most excruciating sufferings of body, than the shame of a dishonourable action and the sting of an accusing conscience." The end of this great man is uncertain; but most historians agree that he suffered at Carthage a most cruel death.

The war was renewed, chiefly in Sicily, with various success. Hamilcar, the father of the celebrated Hannibal, who was himself a commander of distinguished talent, gained several advantages, both by sea and land, which without retrieving the affairs of Carthage, served to protract the war, and gradually to incline the Romans to listen to proposals of peace. After both parties had exhausted themselves by a long and sanguinary struggle, a treaty of peace was concluded between Lutatius, one of the Roman Consuls, and Hamilcar, the Carthaginian General, by which the latter surrendered the whole of Sicily to the Romans, and engaged to liberate the Roman prisoners without ransom, besides paying in twenty years 2200 talents of silver, which were nearly equal to half a million sterling. This treaty, so disgraceful to Carthage, and affording so decisive a proof of the superiority of the Romans, terminated the first Punic war, which had lasted more than twenty-four.

years, and had occasioned on both sides a lamentable expenditure of human life.

Polyb. de Bell. Pun. lib. I. cap. 10—62. Diodor. Sicul. in excerpt. Eutrop. Zonar. Flor. Val. Max. &c.

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### REFLECTIONS.

The rival states of Rome and Carthage were both powerful, but their strength was derived from different sources, and consequently led to very different results. Rome owed her vigour to the patriotism of her citizens, the talents of her generals, the invincible bravery of her troops, and the unshaken resolution of her senate; but Carthage was chiefly indebted to the extent of her commerce, and an abundance of wealth, which enabled her to subsidize foreign powers, procure mercenary troops, purchase large supplies of military and naval stores, and frequently to replace those fleets and armies which were lost by the adverse events of war. The consequence was, as might have been anticipated, that the treasures of Carthage were expended, and she was reduced to the necessity of making a dishonourable peace, while the strength of Rome was yet unbroken, and her internal resources were unimpaired and abundant. Whilst the haughty queen of Africa, saw herself in the day of adversity, deserted by her numerous allies, and betrayed by those legions which had been hired for her defence, the energies of her more vigorous rival seemed to keep pace with her calamities. No difficulties appalled, no defeats discouraged, no losses depressed her. When successful, she was still circumspect; and, when vanquished, undismayed. Let Christians, engaged in a nobler warfare, imitate her invincible courage, her inflexible resolution; and they also will come off more than conquerors. They must indeed expect some reverses, but let them not be discouraged. Their motto



is “perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.”

To commerce, Carthage owed both her elevation and her fall. In the earlier period of her history, it is evident, that the mercantile engagements of her citizens disposed them to peace; they enjoyed many years and even centuries of profound tranquillity; and the fruit of peace was, national prosperity. To this circumstance is to be attributed the far more rapid growth of the Carthaginian, than that of the Roman commonwealth. But commerce has its dangers as well as its advantages—its evils, as well as its benefits. The wealth which was poured into Carthage by this means, first corrupted, and then destroyed that flourishing city. It poisoned the fountain-head of government, and all the subordinate streams of social life. It enervated the minds, and paralyzed all the energies of the people. It inflated them with imaginary self-importance, and buoyed them up with a vain and presumptuous security. It disposed them to place themselves under the protection of mercenaries, and to depend upon foreign alliances, instead of trusting to their own resources. It introduced such venal principles and habits, that all places of trust and importance were publicly sold to the most opulent citizens. These were some of those engines of destruction, which sapped the foundations of the Carthaginian empire. Whilst Britain has great reason to be thankful for her commercial advantages, let her guard with the utmost vigilance against these abuses of national wealth and prosperity. Let her contemplate the ruins of Tyre and of Carthage—cities which once claimed the sovereignty of the seas, and monopolized the commerce of the world—and let her both “watch and pray” against those vices, which accomplished their ruin.

The transition made by the Romans, in a very short period, from a state of inexperience and total ignorance of nautical affairs, to so high a degree of skill and energy, as to enable them to conquer the Carthaginians on their own element, strikingly exhibits the benefits resulting from resolution and industry. Had they been timid or inactive, they would have started back from the idea of

constructing a fleet of sufficient strength to encounter that of their maritime rival; much less would they have entertained the most distant hope of success. But formidable as the undertaking must appear, they made the effort, and instantly grasped the prize. So let us not shrink from enterprises, which may appear both perilous and difficult, if it be our duty to engage in them. To resolve, is more than half to perform.

The last days of Regulus afford much valuable instruction. They teach us not to expect uninterrupted prosperity, for the utmost prudence and most consummate wisdom cannot uniformly command success. They convince us that it is possible, even without the aids of religion, to maintain a calm and unbroken spirit under adversity. They intimate that the most acute sufferings, and even an ignominious death, ought to be preferred to the violation of conscience, and duty. They suggest, that we should never permit either the solicitations of friendship, the love of ease, or the fear of suffering, to induce us to do that which is displeasing to God, and injurious to our own souls. And, finally, they remind us that oaths ought never to be lightly taken, and when taken, should be most sacredly regarded. If these were principles, recognized by heathens themselves, how much more should they influence the conduct of Christians, who have derived them from a purer source, by means of a law more distinctly revealed, and enforced by the most powerful motives.

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## ESSAY V.

*On the second Punic War, from its commencement to the Battle of Cannæ.*

FROM A. C. 205 TO A. C. 203.

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty of peace between Rome and Carthage, the temple of Janus was



shut for the first time, since the reign of Numa. But the storm, which seemed to have been dispersed, soon gathered again, and rendered it necessary to re-open that temple, in a very few months after its gates had been closed. The Corsicans, Sardinians, and Ligurians, secretly encouraged by the Carthaginians, revolted from the Romans, and entered into a league, which was considered so formidable, as to call for the interference of two consular armies, by which these rebellious provinces were reduced and finally conquered. In the mean time, ambassadors were dispatched with threatening messages to Carthage, whose imperious tone of defiance irritated the leading men in that republic, and deepened those resentments, which prudence required them for a time to conceal. It became daily more evident to all who were acquainted with the state of parties both in Carthage and Rome, that the jealousies which had been for a time latent, were not extinguished; but that ere long they would inevitably burst forth into a most destructive flame.

At the head of the party most inveterate in their enmity to the Romans, was Hamilcar, who had been reluctantly constrained to sign the dishonourable treaty, which surrendered Sicily to their more successful rival; and who ardently longed for an opportunity of wiping off the reproach, which he conceived himself to have brought upon his country. As a public expression of the deep resentment which rankled in his breast, when just setting out on an expedition to Spain, he led his son Hannibal to an altar, and there instructed him to swear by the immortal gods, to cherish eternal enmity against the Romans. The lesson thus publicly inculcated was so frequently repeated in private, that the youthful warrior panted for a favourable opportunity of breaking the treaty and commencing hostilities against a people, whose very name he had been taught from his earliest infancy to detest.

His father Hamilcar having been killed in battle, and Asdrubal, his brother-in-law, murdered by a Spanish slave, Hannibal was appointed general of the Carthaginian armies in Spain, in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

One of his first public measures was to besiege Saguntum, which the late treaty had declared to be a neutral city ; a measure which was considered by the Romans as a direct violation of that treaty, and a signal for renewed hostilities. A deputation was instantly sent to Carthage to demand that Hannibal should be delivered into their hands, or, if this proposal were rejected, to declare war. The latter alternative was chosen, and both parties prepared to prosecute with vigour the work of devastation and destruction.

Neither the design, nor the proposed limits of the present work, will admit of even an abridged statement of all the battles which were fought during this most sanguinary contest ; nor would it be possible to trace, with however rapid a flight, the arduous and splendid course of the Carthaginian hero, through the several campaigns of this eventful war. It will be sufficient for the purpose of moral and religious instruction, to glance at some of those difficulties which were surmounted, and those reverses which were experienced at different periods by each of the combatants.

Following the example which the Romans had set in the former war, Hannibal resolved on the invasion of Italy. This enterprise, which, to a mind less ardent and a genius less comprehensive, would have appeared absolutely impracticable, could not fail to expose him to the utmost hardships and dangers. The march of his army, (which is said to have consisted at first of 90,000 foot, and 12,000 horse,) must stretch across tremendous mountains and through the territories of fierce and barbarous tribes, who would incessantly harass his rear, or cut off his foraging detachments. If these difficulties were surmounted, on his arrival in Italy, an armed population of nearly 800,000 warriors awaited him, a considerable part of whom were veteran legions, accustomed to victory, and familiar with dangers. Yet, in defiance of all these formidable obstacles, Hannibal persisted in his design, calculating upon the disaffection of many of those Italian states, which had recently been formed into Roman provinces, and proudly relying upon the inexhaustible resources of his own mighty genius.



So promptly was this project executed, that the Carthaginian army had crossed the Pyrenees, and arrived at the banks of the Rhone, before Cornelius Scipio, one of the Consuls who had been sent into Spain, to watch the motions of Hannibal, received certain intelligence of his design. The Roman general hastened to overtake him, in order, if it were possible, to fix the scene of action in Gaul. But Hannibal, who was no less intent upon making Italy the theatre of war, contrived, by means of long and rapid marches, and by taking an unexpected and circuitous rout, to escape Scipio's army and reach the Alps with almost undiminished forces. Here, however, a most appalling difficulty presented itself. For, in addition to the labour and hazard of transporting a large army over those "cloud-capt" mountains, all the rocky eminences that overhung the track by which they must pass, were filled with native troops intimately acquainted with the country, who perpetually galled them with missile weapons, and fragments broken from the rocks. Having gained the summit, after a harassing march of nine days, Hannibal cheered his troops, with a prospect of the fertile plains of Italy, which they were about to occupy, and where they might hope shortly to enjoy a temporary repose. But the descent presented yet greater difficulties, which nothing but the unshaken resolution and inventive genius of Hannibal could have surmounted. Not only was it found necessary to cut a way for his elephants and horses, through frozen mountains of snow, but in some places through the solid rock, which presented nothing but a series of inaccessible crags, and tremendous precipices. Art and industry however at length prevailed, and Hannibal, proud of having conquered Nature herself, entered Italy in triumph, on the fifteenth day, after he had begun to ascend the Alps.

Cornelius Scipio, who had embarked from Spain in pursuit of Hannibal, arrived with his army in Italy at the moment in which that general reached the plains of Insubria. A partial engagement immediately took place, in which the Roman cavalry was routed by the Numidian, and the Consul himself wounded. Thus disabled either from continuing the action, or effecting his escape,

he would have fallen into the enemy's hand, but for the signal bravery of his son, the celebrated Publius Cornelius Scipio, then a youth of seventeen years of age. Intelligence of Scipio's defeat having arrived at Rome, Sempronius, his consular colleague, was dispatched by the Senate, with considerable reinforcements; the armies met on the banks of the Trebia, and a most disastrous battle was fought, which ended in the complete destruction of the Roman legions, a very small remnant of which escaped to Placentia with the Consul at their head. Yet great as the carnage had been, and total the defeat of the best troops of the republic, the Romans were not discouraged; they levied fresh forces, which were injudiciously entrusted to Flaminius, one of the new Consuls, who, though brave, was destitute of the skill and experience requisite to encounter so formidable an opponent. Outmanœuvred in every instance by his wily adversary, Flaminius was compelled to risk a general engagement under the most unfavourable circumstances, which took place on the banks of the lake Thrasimenus; the result of which was more disastrous to the Romans than the battle of Trebia. Almost the whole army was annihilated, and the Consul himself was found amongst the slain.

Hitherto the tide of success had been wholly in favour of the Carthaginians. Hannibal had been uniformly victorious, and was now fast advancing towards the Roman capital. Many of the Italian provinces had revolted, and declared themselves either independent, or the allies of Carthage. Yet the Senate and people of Rome, far from desponding, seemed to acquire new energy from their calamities. They felt convinced that it was necessary to maintain the contest with greater caution and vigour, and that it became them to entrust their forces to the ablest hands. Fabius (afterwards called Maximus) was appointed Dictator, to whom unquestionably belongs the honour of having checked the progress of Hannibal in the midst of his career of victory, and adopted a mode of warfare, which, though exceedingly unpopular at the time, proved eventually the most successful. Perceiving that all his predecessors had erred by rashness, he resolved to avoid a general



engagement, though the opportunity might appear to be most favourable—to harass the enemy by perpetual skirmishes—to cut off his supplies—and thus, by a tedious and protracted struggle, to exhaust his resources, and oblige him to retreat. This mode of warfare, (which has since been called the *Fabian*, in honour of the Roman general who first practised it with success,) was so dreaded by Hannibal, that he tried every expedient to provoke the Dictator to risk a battle. But all his artifices were vain; Fabius was alike unmoved by the taunts of the enemy, the discontents of his own soldiers, and the murmurs of the Roman people. At length the public impatience rose to such a height, that the Senate were induced to associate with the Dictator, Minutius, his general of the horse, who soon brought himself and his division of the army into such perilous circumstances, that they would have been inevitably cut off by Hannibal, but for the prompt and vigorous assistance of his colleague. Taught by this occurrence to appreciate the talents, and comprehend the plans of the Dictator, Minutius resigned the command with which he had been entrusted, and was satisfied henceforth to hold a subordinate rank under that distinguished chief.

But the Fabian system, was as unpopular at Rome, as it had been harassing to the Carthaginians. Resolved, if possible, to terminate the war at a stroke, eight legions were added to the army of Italy, which now amounted to 80,000 foot, and 7000 horse. These were placed under the command of C. Terentius Varro, a bold and decided warrior, whose impetuous zeal was to be tempered by the prudence and experience of L. Æmilius Paulus, who had conducted most successfully the Illyrian war. These generals were instructed by the Senate to hazard a battle, which took place at Cannæ, on the banks of the Aufidus, and proved more calamitous than any of the former engagements. It is said, that with the loss of but 4000 of his troops, Hannibal put to the sword upwards of 50,000 Romans, and took more than 10,000 prisoners. The Consul Æmilius, who was wounded during an early part of the engagement, would not suffer himself to be borne from the field; but, as soon as he perceived that the day

was inevitably lost, plunged into the thickest of the enemy's ranks, amongst which he fell, covered with innumerable wounds. The surviving Consul escaped to Venusia, where, with an undaunted spirit, he endeavoured to collect the scattered ruins of his army, and place himself and the city in the posture of defence. On account of this intrepidity of character, (a quality so greatly admired by the Romans,) he was met on his return by the whole body of senators, and multitudes of the citizens, who expressed their thanks, that, in the midst of all his misfortunes, "he had not despaired of the republic."

Polyb. lib. 3. Livii Hist. lib. 20—22. Plut. in Fab. Flor. lib. 2. Appian in Punic.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

Little did the amiable and pacific Numa imagine, when he first erected the temple of Janus, and proposed that its gates should be constantly open in time of war, and closed during the continuance of peace, that from the period of his reign to the close of the first Punic war, that is, during a space of more than five hundred years, no opportunity would be afforded of closing, even for a short period, its massy portals. Yet such was the melancholy fact. So devoted were the Romans to martial enterprises, or so incessantly agitated with intestine commotions, that through that long series of years, and even ages, not even a transient interval could be seized for performing that ancient rite. Alas! how large a space in the history of mankind is filled with the distressing details of wars, undertaken from motives of unprincipled ambition! If from the years which have rolled away since man's first apostacy were to be deducted those which have been chronicled in blood, how few would remain! Amongst all the roots of bitterness, which have sprung up to trouble the earth, this has been most fatally productive. Other plants flourish only in particular



climes, but this is every where indigenious. Others have their seasons, in which they blossom and decay; but this brings forth its poisonous fruits at all seasons, and in every age. Happy, happy day, when this deadly plant shall be eradicated from the face of the earth; and when all nations shall repose beneath the shade, and partake of the fatness of the peaceful olive.

It is impossible that any one, whose feelings and principles are regulated by a Christian standard, should contemplate with approbation the odious spectacle of a father bringing his son to the temple at nine years of age, and commanding him to take an oath of perpetual enmity against thousands of his fellow-creatures. Highly as this act might be applauded by those who justified malignity and revenge, and who accounted hatred to enemies both a duty and virtue; it must be abhorrent from the minds of all, who have learnt of the meek and lowly Jesus, to pity, forgive, and even love their enemies. Christian parents, instead of wishing to instil into the breasts of their children sentiments of revenge and malevolence, will feel that it is one of their most imperious duties, to suppress resentful feelings, to quench the kindling sparks of anger, and to inculcate those milder and gentler virtues which are lovely and of good report. Nor let the young imagine that there is any thing exalted and heroic, in cherishing proud and malignant feelings towards their youthful associates; for the greatest hero is most assuredly he that rules his own spirit, and true dignity consists in exercising habitually that mutual forbearance, and mutual forgiveness, of which our Divine Master has set us so illustrious an example.

From the memorable march of Hannibal and his army over the Alps, it were inexcusable not to derive some lessons of practical utility. Would to God that the same intrepid spirit, the same unshaken fortitude, the same invincible energy, were exhibited in a better cause, and applied to nobler and more sacred purposes. So long as we have depraved inclinations, immoral habits, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, with which to contend—so long as there are arduous and almost inaccessible heights of piety and virtue to climb—we cannot

be in want of objects on which to exercise all the energies of the soul, and in which most strenuously to employ all our moral powers. To animate us in this march toward the perfection of our nature, there are many considerations which may be suggested, which could not present themselves to the Carthaginian chief in his perilous enterprise. We know that "our labour is not in vain in the Lord:" we are assured that "in due time we shall reap, if we faint not:" it is certain, that in our warfare perseverance is success, for "he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved."

The moral observer of human character may, in like manner, derive instruction from the successive combatants in the Punic war. One will teach him, the danger of presumption; a second, the inutility of courage without experience, and fortitude without skill; a third, the necessity and advantages of habitual circumspection and watchfulness—whilst a fourth, would impress him with the conviction, that in the utmost danger, there is reason to hope; and in the deepest distress, there is no cause for despair.

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## ESSAY VI.

*On the second Punic War, from the Battle of Cannæ, to its termination.*

FROM A. C. 215—200.

THE series of splendid and decisive victories with which the arms of Carthage had been crowned, during the three first years of the war, were such as not only to justify the expectation that that republic would finally overcome, but also that the contest would be but of short duration. It has been commonly supposed, that if Hannibal had marched his victorious troops to the Roman capital, immediately after the disastrous battle of Cannæ, he would have met with little or no resistance from its



panic-stricken inhabitants. Whether this conjecture be well founded or not, it is certain that the Carthaginian chief did not avail himself of the opportunity, but after having employed several days in collecting the spoils found on the field of battle and in the Roman encampments, he retired to winter quarters in the fruitful province of Campania. Here, in the lap of plenty, and in the enjoyment of temporary repose from the toils of war, he resolved to await the arrival of those reinforcements, which he had sent his brother Mago to solicit from Carthage, and which he hoped to receive early in the spring. But the influence of one winter's relaxation of military discipline, and indulgence in those excesses to which the licentious inhabitants of Capua were addicted, proved more injurious to Hannibal and his troops than all the hardships they had previously sustained. Elate with victory, enriched with spoil, and enervated by ease and inactivity, they were ill prepared, at the return of spring, to contend with a Roman army far superior in numbers, and led on by so enterprising a commander as Marcellus.

From this period, the manifest decline of Hannibal's affairs in Italy may be dated. Though his combined skill and vigilance prevented him from committing any fatal error, or giving any signal advantage to Marcellus, (who, on account of the vigour and promptitude of his military exploits, was called *the sword of the republic*,) he was repeatedly baffled in his projects, and obliged to relinquish them with considerable loss. The sieges of Casilinum, Nola, Cumæ, and others, cost him more time and troops than all the series of his former victories. Yet, it must be admitted, that his genius and talent were not less conspicuous in the unwearied perseverance with which he maintained the contest upwards of sixteen years, in a hostile country, and without foreign reinforcements or supplies, than in the most splendid period of his military career. It cost the Romans thirteen years to regain by slow and cautious steps, those possessions which this hardy veteran had wrested from them in three. Nor is it probable that Hannibal would have abandoned Italy at last, had not the perilous circumstances of his

native country induced the Senate of Carthage to recal him for its defence.

Whilst Hannibal was maintaining in Italy an unequal struggle with far superior forces, events took place in Greece, Sicily, and Spain, which were not indeed calculated to attract so much attention, but which had a considerable influence upon the issue of the war. In Greece, Philip of Macedon, who had shewn a disposition to favour and assist the Carthaginians, was defeated by Lævinus the Roman Consul, and induced to purchase peace by relinquishing his alliance with Carthage. In Sicily, Marcellus distinguished himself by conducting the siege and effecting the capture of Syracuse, notwithstanding the skill and science with which it was defended, under the direction of the celebrated Archimedes. That eminent mathematician understood so well the force of mechanism, that he is said to have constructed engines of destruction, by which the Roman galleys were lifted up from their stations and dashed in pieces, and burning lenses, which repeatedly set on fire, and destroyed the hostile fleet. When the city was taken, Archimedes was found in his study, engaged in abstruse speculations, and killed by a Roman soldier; but Marcellus lamented his death, interred him honourably, and erected a monument to his memory.

In Spain, the two elder Scipios on the one part, and on the other Asdrubal, Hannibal's brother, carried on the war with various success, all of whom fell on the field of battle. At length a youthful hero succeeded to the command in that province, at his own earnest request, who quickly and completely turned the scale of victory in favour of the Romans. This was Publius Scipio, (afterwards called Africanus,) at that time a youth of twenty-four years of age, but who had already given the most decided proof of pre-eminent military talents. It has been already mentioned to his honour, that in the first battle between Hannibal and the Romans, after the invasion of Italy, he rescued his wounded parent from the grasp of the enemy. In the battle of Cannæ, though he held but a subordinate rank, his personal valour and in-



trepidity was most conspicuous, and after that catastrophe, he detected and defeated a conspiracy into which many illustrious Romans had entered, to desert their country in the hour of her need, and to transport themselves and their substance into Greece. Yet though educated in a camp and early accustomed to sanguinary and tumultuous scenes, he is said to have possessed a mild and amiable disposition, to have had his appetites and passions remarkably under controul, and to have cultivated the gentler graces in his conversation and deportment.

From the time of Scipio's entrance into Spain, he proceeded step by step in an uninterrupted career of victory, till all the Carthaginian settlements in that country were occupied by his troops, and annexed to the Roman empire. His military reputation occasioned his election to the consulate, before he had attained his thirtieth year. Upon his elevation to that dignity, he proposed to the Senate a project, which he had long meditated, and from which he anticipated the most important results; namely, to transfer the principal seat of the war from Europe to Africa, and attack Carthage within her own borders. But many of the Senators considered the measure too hazardous, whilst such an adversary as Hannibal was almost at their gates, and all agreed that no forces could be spared at present, but those which might be drawn from Sicily, or which the popularity of the Consul might attract to his standard. With these apparently inadequate supplies, he passed over into Africa, and, having taken possession of a Carthaginian port, which afforded protection to his fleet, proceeded with his army to occupy the interior of that flourishing empire.

During his residence in Spain, Scipio had attached to his interests, Massinissa, the exiled king of Numidia, who, though deposed by Syphax his more successful rival, was equally beloved by his late subjects. This prince joined the standard of Scipio immediately after his landing in Africa, with a considerable body of Numidians whom he had privately collected. Encouraged by this seasonable reinforcement, Scipio marched to meet Syphax, who was most warmly attached to the

interests of Carthage, and an inveterate enemy of Rome, in consequence of his having married Sophonisba, the daughter of Asdrubal. The united forces of Scipio and Massinissa soon overthrew the usurper, who together with his beauteous queen, and all his royal treasures, fell into the hands of the Romans. But the prince of Numidia no sooner saw his fair captive, than his susceptible mind was inflamed with her beauty, and he was induced to marry her without the knowledge or consent of Scipio. When the Roman general, who was himself an eminent example of continence, was informed of this event, he demanded a private interview with his royal ally, in which he reasoned so forcibly on the impolicy and iniquity of his nuptials with one, who was the wife of another, and the most implacable enemy of Rome, that Massinissa was induced to send his bride a cup of poison, as the only means of extricating himself from his embarrassments. Sophonisba received the deadly potion with the utmost tranquillity; and, with an unaltered countenance and unfaltering voice, commanded the royal messenger, to "thank her lord for having regarded her glory more than her life."

The rapid success of Scipio convinced the Carthaginians of the necessity of recalling Hannibal from Italy, if they would save their capital, which was already threatened. With the utmost reluctance did that veteran warrior quit a country which had been the theatre of his glory, and where he still hoped to humble his proud rival. But as his orders were peremptory, he embarked with all his remaining forces without delay, and landed at Leptis in Africa, where a mixed multitude of Carthaginian mercenaries awaited him. The two armies soon met at Zama, where the question was to be finally decided, whether Rome or Carthage should be the mistress of the world. Before the action commenced, an interview took place at the request of Hannibal between the rival chiefs, in which an unsuccessful attempt was made to negotiate a peace. Each leader was too confident of success, and too sensible of the superior claims of his own country, to accept of just and reasonable terms. A tremendous battle followed, when it may be truly affirmed that the



sun of Carthage set in blood. After the most prodigious efforts, in which his valour and skill were equally displayed, Hannibal was totally defeated, and fled to Adrumetum. Thence he repaired alone to Carthage, presented himself before the Senate, and advised them to make peace with their victorious rival on any terms however humiliating, since at the present moment all resistance would be fruitless. A treaty was concluded first in the camp of Scipio, the terms of which were dictated by the Consul, and afterwards ratified at Rome by the Senate. According to this treaty, Carthage relinquished all claims to Spain, and the islands in the Mediterranean, and was obliged to surrender to the Romans all her ships of war to the amount of five hundred, (ten only excepted,) which were burnt by Scipio before he returned to Italy. A magnificent triumph awaited the youthful conqueror on his arrival at Rome; but his unfortunate and vanquished rival met with far different treatment. Pursued alike by the resentments of his own people and of the Romans, he fled from city to city, until at length, to avoid being delivered into the hands of his implacable foes, he destroyed himself by poison.

Liv. Hist. lib. 23—30. Polyb. lib. 10—15. Appian de Bel. Punic. Plut. in Marcell. et Fab. Valer. Maxim. &c. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The whole of the preceding narrative suggests, the importance of seizing the favourable opportunity for securing the objects of our pursuit, whatever they may be. For

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to Fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries ;”

a season, which, if neglected, may never be recovered ; a moment which, if slighted, will be lost for ever. This is a species of folly, with which the wisest and greatest of

men are chargeable, as well as others; and, what is most of all to be deplored, which is practised with reference to eternal things, as well as to those of time. How many duties are deferred until the uncertain morrow, to which reason, conscience, the divine law, and present opportunity, concur to invite us to-day! How many in mature life and old age have regretted the loss of the golden period of youth—a period so favourable to every species of moral and religious improvement! Could we listen to the lamentations of lost souls in the regions of darkness and despair, we should find that they chiefly consist of unavailing regrets, on account of the irrecoverable loss of those opportunities which were once granted, when space was given them to repent, but they repented not. Let us then derive from the inadvertence, the folly, and the fatal neglect of others, this practical lesson—“Whatsoever our hands find to do, to do it with our might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither we go.”

It may be remarked further, that true greatness of mind discovers itself most of all in struggling with adversity, and bearing up courageously under affliction. To the cursory observer, Hannibal might appear greatest when floating on the current of prosperity, amidst the full tide of his success and triumphs—but surely the more contemplative mind would arrive at a different conclusion, and would gather the proofs of his magnanimity, from the patient toil with which he surmounted the difficulties of a transalpine march, and the invincible firmness with which he maintained the conflict, when success became hopeless, and his resources were daily diminishing. Affliction is the test of principle, as well as of magnanimity; and never is the reality and efficacy of religion more strikingly exhibited, than in the character of a suffering saint, who, amidst a great fight of affliction, possesses his soul in patience, and calmly waits the issue, in meek submission to the divine will.

The character of Scipio Africanus, contemplated in a moral light, is highly interesting and instructive. It forms a grateful contrast to the stern and ferocious temper of his veteran antagonist. The former, though not



inferior in military talent, rises far above his rival in moral excellence, in the controul of his passions, the government of his temper, the mild and amiable qualities of his heart, and the moderation and continence of his life. These are qualities of no ordinary value, wherever they are found; but they are peculiarly excellent, when exhibited by characters whose education and circumstances in life, almost necessarily exclude them; and when putting forth their tender blossoms, or yielding their exquisite fruit, as in the case of Scipio, amidst the tumults of a camp, and the boisterous occupations of a military life. To what distressing consequences do incontinence and illicit passion frequently lead! Of this we have a striking example in the history of Massinissa the Numidian prince. Without submitting the conduct of this prince to the test of christian principles, a test with which he was of course unacquainted, his character, if weighed in the balance of heathen morality, will be found miserably defective. Fascinated by the beauty of Sophonisba, hurried along by his passions, regardless of the lessons of continence he had frequently received from his Roman friend, and in direct violation of the most sacred conjugal rights, he took a step, which his conscience must have loudly condemned, and which probably embittered all his future days. For it is not easy to conceive how great must have been the conflict of such a susceptible mind between passion and interest, affection and honour, love and friendship, before a resolution so melancholy, barbarous and criminal, could be formed, as that of poisoning his beauteous bride.

Ah! how many parallels to the guilt and consequent wretchedness of Massinissa, may be gathered from the annals of youthful profligacy. How many, seduced by their passions, are betrayed into imprudences, to conceal which they find it necessary to plunge yet deeper into guilt and infamy! How many, beguiled and enslaved by their appetites, bring themselves into the most embarrassing circumstances, from which they are unable to extricate themselves, but by adding sin to sin, and perpetrating the basest of crimes. Let therefore the young, in the hour of temptation, make a covenant with

their eyes—let them keep their hearts with all diligence, if they would shun the guilt and avoid the misery, which are inseparable from criminal gratification.

Finally, how evanescent is human greatness! See the boasted hero, who made Rome tremble for her very existence, and threatened to hurl her from the pinnacle of her ambition, a hoary exile, and needy dependant, at the court of Prusius, king of Bithynia, living in continual alarm, and at last driven to the necessity of destroying himself, in order to escape captivity—and who is there that would envy his lot, or wish their last end to be like his. “Died he not as a fool dies?” How justly applicable to his fall, is that beautiful picture of prostrate ambition, which our immortal Bard has sketched in the character of Wolsey.

“I’ve touched the highest point of all my greatness,  
And, from that full meridian of my glory,  
I haste now to my setting. I shall fall,  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more. —————

————— Now I am left  
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.”

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## ESSAY VII.

*On the Macedonian Wars—Death of SCIPIO AFRICANUS  
—Third Punic War—Destruction of Carthage.*

FROM A. C. 200—146.

FROM the period of Roman History, at which we have now arrived, the concerns of that republic are intimately connected with those of almost the whole civilized world. Most of the European, African, and Asiatic states, gradually became either tributary provinces, or allies of the commonwealth. The legions of Rome were continually employed in foreign expeditions,



intended either to enforce the subjection of countries already conquered, or to extend the boundaries of the empire. The enfeebled and degraded condition of Greece—the perpetual contests of the Ætolians and Achæans\*—and especially the rivalry of those princes, between whom the Macedonian empire had been divided, opened a wide field to the ambition of Rome, and even seemed to invite her interference. To this quarter therefore, the attention of that republic was directed, immediately after the conquest of Carthage. Two circumstances which occurred at that time, afforded a plausible pretext for commencing hostilities in Greece; the one was, the discovery of some Macedonian soldiers amongst the prisoners taken by Scipio in the battle of Zama, from which it appeared that Philip had violated his treaty with Rome by secretly assisting the Carthaginians; and the other, an application made by the Athenians for succours, to defend them from Philip, who was desirous of adding that celebrated city to his other conquests in Greece. To these may be added, a general expectation which was entertained at Rome, that Philip meditated a descent upon the coast of Italy. War with Macedon was therefore decreed in the Senate, and Sulpicius Galba, one of the consuls, was sent to conduct its operations.

Sulpicius was joined by the Rhodians, the Ætolians, and by Attalus, king of Pergamus, with whose assistance, he defeated Philip in several engagements, and obliged him to raise the siege of Athens. He was succeeded by Titus Quinctius Flamininus, who carried on the war with still greater success. The Macedonians, after several destructive battles, were forced to submit to the terms dictated by the conqueror; the principal of which was, that Philip should withdraw his garrisons from the Grecian fortresses, and leave the republics to govern themselves by their own laws and usages. This tone of moderation, and apparent regard to the independence and liberty of Greece; gained over to the interests of

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\* See Hist. of Greece. Book III. Essay 13.

Rome all the states which had been rescued by its arms from foreign usurpation. The popularity of the Romans was greatly increased by the proclamation of liberty and independence, which was made at the approaching Isthmian games, of which a more particular account is contained in the former volume.\*

No sooner was Philip of Macedon humbled, than the Romans turned their victorious arms against Antiochus, king of Syria, whose greatest offence seems to have been that he had sheltered Hannibal at his court, admitted him to his counsels, and refused to deliver him up, when demanded by the Romans. It was supposed or pretended, that Antiochus had secretly concerted with the Carthaginians, a simultaneous invasion of Italy and Greece, and that Hannibal, who was still living, was to be entrusted with the command of one of the invading armies. Whether these apprehensions were real or feigned, well or ill-founded, does not distinctly appear; it is however certain, that they formed an excuse for augmenting the Roman fleets and armies, and making immediate preparation for an arduous struggle, in which they expected again to encounter the most distinguished warrior of the age. But Antiochus, either prompted by a jealousy of the Carthaginian hero, or by alarm at the name of Scipio, who was sent into Asia at the head of a formidable army, made but a feeble resistance, which was followed by a disgraceful flight, and ended in a most dishonourable peace. The honour of this most brilliant expedition, in consequence of the illness of Publius Scipio, was reaped by his brother Lucius, who was henceforth distinguished by the title of *Asiaticus*, as Publius had long been by that of *Africanus*.

Whilst these transactions were taking place in Asia and Greece, the Romans were fully occupied in Europe, with reducing the revolted provinces of Spain, and holding in check the populous tribes of Gauls and Ligurians, who frequently ravaged the Roman frontiers, and carried on an irregular but most destructive warfare. These

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\* Grec. Hist. Book III. Essay 13.



various and constant occupations so completely engrossed the attention of all classes of Roman citizens, that the old disputes between patricians and plebeians, and the former struggles for the Agrarian and other popular laws, were for a time forgotten, and a perfect domestic calm was enjoyed. But this period of internal tranquillity terminated with the return of the two Scipios from Asia, who were prosecuted by a faction that was envious of their reputation, and conspired their ruin. The conqueror of Carthage, when accused by the tribunes of having defrauded the common people of their portion of the spoils taken in war, disdained to reply, or to take any measures for his defence; but, suffering judgment to go by default, he retired to Linternum, a village of Campania, where he died soon after, leaving an express order, that "his bones might not be carried to Rome for interment amongst those, who had treated him with so much ingratitude, when living." It is remarkable, that the same year terminated the life of this distinguished Roman, of his celebrated Carthaginian rival, and of Philopœmen, the last of the Grecian generals.

At this period flourished Cato the Censor, whose discharge of that office was distinguished by excessive severity. Many of the senators were degraded by his sole authority; luxuries and superfluities were forbidden; the Roman ladies were stripped of their jewels; and imposts were laid upon every species of extravagance, which foreign conquests and imported wealth had introduced. After the expiration of his censorship, he devoted himself chiefly to literary pursuits, (with the exception of Grecian literature, to which he was decidedly adverse,) the education of his children, and rural occupations. He is supposed to have been the most ancient of the Roman Historians, and to have greatly excelled in that masculine eloquence, which was then cultivated so successfully by the Romans. It must not however be concealed, that this rigid censor of public manners was the secret slave of appetite, and addicted to the private indulgence of the most degrading vices.

A second Macedonian war quickly followed the former, which, after having lasted three years, terminated

in the total overthrow of the kingdom of Macedon, and the capture of Perseus, the son of Philip, who then filled the throne. This successful and speedy issue of the contest was solely to be ascribed to the unrivalled talents of Æmilius, the Roman general, who brought the captive monarch and his family to Rome, to grace his triumph. About the same time, a similar disgrace befel the king of Illyricum, whose territories as well as those of Perseus, were divided into Roman provinces, to be governed by prætors annually chosen by the Senate. Elated with these successes, the pride and ambition of the Romans knew no bounds. They seem to have considered themselves as the umpires of the world, who possessed the right of arbitrating between princes and their subjects, or between contending kingdoms, in the remotest climes. A remarkable instance of the arrogant tone in which they dictated to foreign princes, when in the plenitude of their power, has been recorded by several ancient historians. When Antiochus Epiphanes was pursuing a train of victories in Egypt, during the minority of Ptolemy its hereditary prince, and, after having occupied the greater part of the kingdom, was preparing to besiege Alexandria, the Romans sent Popilius Lænas to his camp, with a mandate from the Senate to desist from that enterprise. Antiochus, who was alike unwilling to relinquish his conquests, and to offend the Romans, hesitated to reply. But the Roman Legate, with the rod which he held in his hand, drew a circle round the prince, and haughtily exclaimed, "Determine, before you pass that line."

The enjoyment of uninterrupted tranquillity, and of an extensive commerce upwards of forty years, had restored Carthage to its former state of opulence and splendour, and rendered it once more an object of jealousy to the Romans. Often was it debated in the Senate, whether the interests of the republic did not require a third Punic war, and many concurred with Cato the Censor, in asserting not only its expediency, but its necessity. "*Delenda est Carthago*,"\* were the

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\* Carthage must be destroyed.



memorable words, with which that stern republican concluded every speech he delivered in the Senate for several years; nor did he rest, till a war of extermination was resolved upon, for which not even the slightest pretext could be found. Every effort was made by the Carthaginians to avert the storm. Ambassadors were sent to Rome, with full powers to make every reasonable concession which their haughty rival might demand, and even the most unjust claims were instantly granted. Three hundred children belonging to the first families in Carthage were delivered as hostages into the hands of the Romans; a surrender was made of their country, cities, and lands, to the Roman commonwealth; nor were their arms and military stores withheld, when demanded by the Roman quæstors. Yet all was ineffectual; the purpose of destroying Carthage, though concealed, was not for a moment lost sight of by the Senate; and all these were but preparatory steps to its execution. No sooner were the deluded Carthaginians induced to surrender their means of defence, than they were informed, that “they must abandon their city, which was to be rased to the ground; and that they were permitted to build another on any spot they might choose, not less than ten miles distant from the sea, upon condition that it was without walls or fortifications.”

The Romans flattered themselves, that their precautionary measures had been so effectual that no resistance would now be made to this iniquitous proposal. But the attachment which nature inspires to our fire-sides and our altars, to the place of our birth and to the sepulchres of our forefathers, operated so powerfully upon the minds of the Carthaginians, that they determined rather to perish amidst the ruins of their city, than to desert its battlements. Despair gave them courage, furnished them with new armour, and transformed at once a timid and subdued people, into a nation of heroes. Their vessels of silver and gold were moulded into weapons of war; their palaces and temples furnished timber for the construction of military engines; and even the hair of their wives and daughters were made into cords and cables, with which to work them. The magazines were filled

with provisions, hastily collected from the adjacent country; and every thing indicated a fixed determination to sustain all the toils and sufferings of a protracted siege.

The commencement of the siege was calamitous to the assailants, who were frequently repulsed with great loss. It is even probable that the Romans, after having spent several years before the walls of that city, and lost many thousand troops, would have been compelled to abandon the enterprise, if Scipio Æmilianus, the adopted son of Africanus, who was appointed to the command, had not found means to corrupt one of the Carthaginian generals, who brought over to the enemy the greater part of the Carthaginian cavalry, in which their strength chiefly consisted. After this act of perfidy, the city was soon taken, and the citadel invested, in which upwards of fifty thousand persons of different sexes were immured. The greater part of these, at length, accepted of quarter, and were taken captive by the Romans; but a small number, amongst whom were the wife and children of Asdrubal the Carthaginian general, having set fire to a temple, deliberately precipitated themselves into the flames. A general conflagration took place, which is said to have continued seventeen days, in which multitudes of the inhabitants, who still clung to their desolate dwellings, were consumed. Thus perished Carthage, a city, the most renowned of any which then existed, for arts, opulence, and extensive dominion, crushed by the iron grasp of her jealous rival, after having first been enfeebled by her own luxury and pride. In the same year a similar desolation overwhelmed Corinth, the richest city in Greece, under the direction of Mummius, the Roman Consul.\*

Polyb. lib. 13. et seq. Liv. Hist. lib. 33. &c. Plut. in vit. Flam. Paul. Æmil. Caton. Appian in Punic. &c.

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\* See Hist of Greece. Book III. Essay 14.



## REFLECTIONS.

The miscellaneous contents of the present essay suggest a variety of useful remarks, applicable to the various circumstances of human life. In the degraded state of the Greeks, and the successive subversions of the Macedonian, Illyrian, and Syrian monarchies, we cannot but discern the mischievous influence of discord and jealousy. If the Grecian republics had remained united, as in the earlier period of their history, they had been invincible. Or if Alexander's successors had acted in concert, instead of cherishing a spirit of rivalry and competition, their empires had been impregnable. But, whilst the *Ætolians* were struggling with the *Achæans*, and the king of *Macedon* with both—whilst *Philip* was contending with *Eumenes*, or *Antiochus* with *Ptolemy*—they severally became the easy prey of an insidious foe, who promised them liberty, but gave fetters—who professed moderation, but practised tyranny. Thus have the most important advantages been given to the enemies of truth and holiness, by the disunion of their professed advocates. The sacred cause of the Redeemer has thus been weakened and betrayed by the mutual jealousies and bitter animosities of those who seem to have espoused it. While “*Ephraim* has vexed *Judah*, and *Judah*, *Ephraim*,” their common enemies have triumphed, and exclaimed, “*Aha! so would we have it.*”

The conduct of the Romans to *Scipio Africanus* evinced the basest ingratitude. To him they were indebted not only for their safety and splendid success, but even for their national existence. He had withdrawn a most formidable enemy from their gates, and raised the majesty of Rome to an elevation, which it had not previously attained, and which, it is probable, it never would have attained, without the aid of his comprehensive genius. Yet this public benefactor was slighted, accused, condemned, and driven into voluntary exile, by his ungrateful countrymen. Though confessedly one of the brightest ornaments of the republic, he was cast out with contempt, as unworthy to dwell within its

borders; and though one of its most devoted patriots, he was so deeply affected with the injustice of his fellow-citizens, as not to suffer even his ashes to rest among them. There is nothing that wounds a sensible mind so deeply as ingratitude; nor is there any thing that fixes a deeper stain of infamy on the character either of nations or of individuals.

From the character of Cato the censor, we may learn that it is much easier to reprove the vices of others, than to correct our own—that a high reputation for virtue, and loud pretensions to superior sanctity, may be compatible with the secret indulgence of sin—and that it is possible to conceal the most degrading habits, and the most ferocious dispositions, beneath a mask of severe morality and fervent patriotism. Thus while Cato inveighed against the dissipation and luxury of the times, his latent vices escaped detection; and whilst he loudly called for the destruction of Carthage, none supposed that he was gratifying a revengeful temper instead of pleading his country's cause. What a mixture of impurity and insincerity is to be found in the motives and actions even of the best of men, of which they are sometimes scarcely conscious themselves, much less can it be detected by others. Whoever has properly considered the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart, will be convinced of the necessity of examining most minutely into the springs and motives of our actions—not only of those which are doubtful, but of those also which seem most decidedly virtuous. For it should be remembered that our Saviour, who knew what was in man, found it necessary to caution even his chosen disciples, against “the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*.”

The cruel and unjust policy of the Romans towards their fallen rival, bears but too strong a resemblance to the methods pursued by our spiritual adversaries, to accomplish our destruction. First they profess friendship—then deprive us of our means of defence—and finally lead us into captivity. If the Carthaginians had been sufficiently alive to their danger, before they were induced by fraud and treachery to surrender their arms;



or even if, after having been thus deceived, they had adhered firmly to each other, they would have probably escaped destruction. If we would shun temptation, we must be vigilant—we must be steadfast—we must make no unworthy compromises,—nor so much as for a moment may we listen to the treacherous proposals of those, who, whatever they may profess, are bent upon our ruin.

Though no excuse can be made for the perfidy and injustice of the Romans in the whole of this sanguinary proceeding, it is not difficult to discern the hand of the God of Vengeance, working “by terrible things in righteousness,” the purpose of his own will. Carthage and Corinth, cities which were rivals in commerce, in wealth, and in profligacy of manners, were cotemporaries in their final desolation. The same instrument was selected by the Sovereign of the Universe, to sweep them, as with the besom of destruction. At the same moment the measure of their iniquity was filled up, and the storm of wrath descended with desolating fury. On the ruins of both are inscribed in flaming characters, “Though hand join in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished.”

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## ESSAY VIII.

*On the character and death of the GRACCHI.*

TIBERIUS DIED A. C. 132. CAIUS DIED A. C. 120.

THE persons, whose names are prefixed to the present essay, lived and flourished at a very eventful period. Their conduct has been variously represented, according to the political principles of their biographers. Some have loaded them with opprobrium, as traitors to their country, and have affixed to their public measures the odious name of *sedition*; whilst others have eulogized them in the most extravagant terms, pronouncing them

martyrs to the sacred cause of liberty, and patriots of the highest order. The truth, it is probable, lies between the two opinions. The following facts seem to justify the conclusion, that they were honest in intention, but imprudent in action; and that as they proceeded in their career, they suffered themselves to be hurried by their passions into measures, which would have proved injurious, if not fatal to the republic.

The Sempronian family, from which the Gracchi were descended, though plebeian, was one of the most illustrious in Rome. Their father, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, had attained to high distinction, having been twice Consul, and honoured with two triumphs; nor was it his least distinction, to be married to Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, a woman of an exalted mind, of polished taste, and of extensive erudition.—Eminently qualified by her literary attainments for the pleasing task, she charged herself with the entire education of her sons. This accomplished preceptress unfolded to her pupils all the rich stores of Grecian literature, which then began to be in high estimation; and, by her lessons, they were early initiated into an acquaintance with the prevailing systems of philosophy, whose moral maxims were inculcated with all the earnestness of maternal solicitude and affection. The fruit of these early advantages appeared in the superiority of her youthful charge to their contemporaries, in every kind of intellectual attainment. Tiberius, the elder of her sons, grew up all that a mother's fondest wishes could desire; the most learned, eloquent, and accomplished of Roman youths. After having spent his juvenile days beneath the eye, and in attending to the instructions of his excellent mother, Tiberius repaired to the Roman camp, and held for several years an important post in the army of Scipio Æmilianus, who had previously married his sister Sempronius. But military occupations were ill adapted to his taste, and soon relinquished for the study of law, and the practice of eloquence; in the latter of which, he was so great a proficient, as to be reputed at thirty years of age, by far the most perfect orator of his day.

Unhappily Tiberius Gracchus had formed an early



and deeply-rooted aversion to the Senate, by whom he had been treated with injustice during his quaestorship in Spain, and whose arbitrary proceedings had repeatedly filled him with disgust. This sentiment was strengthened by the scenes of oppression he had witnessed in his travels through Italy, where he had observed that a comparatively small number of wealthy individuals treated not only their slaves, but even the poorer Roman citizens, with the utmost cruelty. These instances of barbarity, as often as they had attracted his notice, harrowed up his soul; and prompted the generous resolution of becoming the friend of the poor, and the avenger of the oppressed. That he might accomplish his purpose more effectually, he obtained his election to the office of tribune, which would constitute him the official guardian of the rights and privileges of his fellow-citizens. The first exercise of his tribunitial authority was to propose the revival of the Licinian Law (which had long become obsolete) in a modified form, and suited to the altered circumstances of the republic. It was not however to be expected that a measure, which had encountered so much opposition, when proposed two hundred and fifty years before, and at a time when the territories of the republic were exceedingly limited, would be carried without the most determined opposition from the senate and nobles, now that the conquests of the republic were so extensive, and its wealth was so abundant.

Every effort was made to prevent the adoption of this new Agrarian Law. The most popular orators were employed to declaim against it on all public occasions. The senators represented to the people the confusion and anarchy, which must arise from the execution of so obnoxious a measure. When all these expedients failed, the last resource was to gain over to their party one of the tribunes, whose simple  *veto*  was sufficient to stay proceedings. With extreme mortification, Tiberius Gracchus found on the day appointed for the proposition of his law, that Octavius Cæcina, one of his colleagues, to whom he was warmly attached, had been gained by the Senate, and that no entreaties or arguments could induce him to withhold his prohibition. From this period,

Tiberius seems to have acted under the influence of irritation, rather than sound judgment. To this cause is to be attributed the impetuosity of his future proceedings, which terminated so fatally to himself, and so calamitously to the republic. Baffled, but not subdued, he resorted to the most violent measures; by virtue of his authority as tribune, he suspended all magistracies in Rome; he laid the state itself under a temporary interdict, and even proceeded so far as to procure the expulsion of his refractory colleague from the Tribunate, by a vote of the assembly. The chief obstacle to the execution of his design being now removed, he again proposed his law, to which were now added some clauses still more offensive to the rich, and more favourable to the interests of the lower classes of citizens. It was carried with the utmost enthusiasm, and commissioners were appointed to superintend its execution. These were Tiberius Gracchus himself, Appius Claudius his father-in-law, and his younger brother Caius Gracchus, then serving under Scipio at the siege of Numantia.

A ferment was immediately excited in every part of Italy by the attempts of the commissioners to enforce the execution of this statute. The wealthy citizens, who were deprived of a great part of their possessions, became exceedingly clamorous; and the poor, who had formed the most extravagant expectations, were scarcely less tumultuous and discontented. Many of the citizens appeared in mourning, as in a time of public calamity, and Gracchus either was, or affected to consider himself, in continual danger of assassination. A circumstance which occurred at that time, afforded the tribune an opportunity of increasing his popularity, and mortifying the senate and nobles in the highest degree. Attalus, king of Pergamus, at his death, bequeathed all his possessions to the Romans: the Senate intended to make this valuable legacy a source of private emolument, or of public patronage; but Gracchus prevailed upon the people to pass a decree which required that all those treasures should be divided amongst the poorest of the Roman citizens, at the discretion of the above-mentioned commissioners. These repeated aggressions upon the power and privileges of



the Senate, were represented by them, as so many deliberate attempts to subvert the constitution; and induced them to menace the Tribune with impeachment, as soon as his office should expire. In order to protect himself from this threatened prosecution, he resolved, though in violation of the laws of Rome, to obtain his re-election to the tribunate, by the favour of the people; and with this view, announced several popular laws which he intended to introduce in the following year. But to this new infringement upon the constitution, the aristocracy determined not to submit. They even resolved, if necessary, to oppose force to force; they voted that "the commonwealth was in danger;" and instructed the Consuls "to provide for the safety of the state,"—measures which were only resorted to on the most alarming occasions. The Consul Mucius Scævola, who had acted with T. Gracchus in the commencement of his political career, refused to carry into effect the violent resolutions of the Senate; but Scipio Nasica, one of the more intemperate of that body, called upon his associates to follow him to the forum, where the scribes were already assembled for the election of tribunes.

The entrance of so numerous a body of the most distinguished citizens of Rome, impressed the assembly with awe. Tiberius, beloved as he was by the people, and surrounded by thousands of his most zealous partisans, was almost immediately deserted. The senators pressed forward through the crowd to seize him; one of them approached so near as to lay hold of his robe; but the tribune, leaving it in his hand, attempted to escape by flight from the tumult. In his haste, he fell, and before he could recover himself was stunned by a violent blow from one of his colleagues, who was either envious of his popularity, or secretly in the interest of the Senate. His patrician adversaries in the mean time came up, and killed him with repeated blows. Nearly three hundred of his party perished with him, all whose bodies, together with that of Tiberius, were cast into the Tiber, by order of the Senate. Nor could the afflicted mother of the tribune, or his younger and yet unoffending brother Caius, obtain permission to pay the customary honours of inter-

ment to his remains. After this melancholy event, Cornelia retired to Campania, and Caius, seeming to shun all public notice, continued his studies at Rome.

The death of Tiberius did not, however, restore tranquillity to Rome. For, although many of his partisans either fell with him, or were subsequently tried and condemned, yet many others were left, who only wanted a vigorous leader, around whose standard of opposition they might rally. Such were Fulvius Flaccus and Papirius Carbo, who had been nominated as commissioners for executing the Agrarian Law, in the place of Appius Claudius, and Tiberius Gracchus. These unquiet spirits continually devised some new project, tending to keep alive the animosities between the Senate and people, and to gratify the latter at the expence of the former. For several years, it was not known, whether Caius Gracchus would tread in the perilous steps of his brother; or whether, yielding to the earnest entreaties of his mother Cornelia, who now exerted all her influence to dissuade him from embarking on the tempestuous sea of political discord, he would spend his days in literary retirement. Unhappily, ambition prevailed over the dictates of filial affection, and prompted him to signalize himself by pursuing exactly the same course, which had proved so fatal to Tiberius.

Having discharged the office of quæstor in Sardinia with great fidelity and applause, Caius returned to Rome without having been recalled by the Senate, whose policy it had been to keep at a distance so popular and dangerous a rival. On his return, he was elected tribune, an office which gave full scope to his oratorical powers, which were even greater than those of Tiberius, and at which all who aimed at distinguished popularity aspired. His first tribunate was distinguished by so many popular laws, that he was re-elected to that office with comparatively little difficulty. The senators found it impossible to contend with this formidable opponent without employing his own weapons. They therefore persuaded Livius Drusus, one of the tribunes, to rival Caius in all his most popular measures by proposing others yet more acceptable to the lower classes, and thus gradually to



alienate the affections of the people from him. They even made concessions which were unsolicited, that Caius might not have the credit of proposing them. By such artful proceedings, the way was prepared for the catastrophe which quickly followed. When a favourable opportunity presented itself for appealing to the sword, the wavering and undecided populace scarcely knew to which of their leaders they should cleave. Caius was deserted in the hour of danger; his most zealous followers forsook him and fled; and he himself, finding it impossible by any other means to escape from his enraged adversaries, requested one of his few faithful attendants to terminate his existence. The request was complied with, and the slave who executed it, immediately afterwards fell upon his own sword. The tumult which preceded and followed this event proved more sanguinary than that in which Tiberius fell, since it is stated, that upwards of 3000 of the slain were cast into the Tiber. The head of Caius was afterwards brought to the Consul by an obscure individual, who was rewarded with its weight in gold; and the effects of all the principal partisans of the Gracchi were confiscated.

The administration of the Gracchi, and especially of Caius, notwithstanding its turbulence, was the most splendid in the annals of the republic. For during that period, public works of great utility were carried on in different parts of Italy, flourishing colonies were planted in various parts of Asia and Africa, wars were successfully carried on in Spain and Gaul; and part of the latter country was for the first time subdued and formed into a Roman province. Some of the laws too which were introduced by these unfortunate youths were confessedly of great importance to the state, and as such were preserved in force, long after their authors had ignobly perished. But from the period of their death, the Republic became more corrupt, and rapidly advanced to that dissolution, the circumstances and instruments of which will be more fully described in the following essay.

Plut. in vit. Tib. et Cai. Gracch. Appian. de Bell. Civil. Ciceron. Oper. Vell. Patere. Flor. &c.

## REFLECTIONS.

If it were within the design of the present work, to survey the political aspect of characters and events, the facts which have been just stated, and the lives of the Roman brethren with whom those facts were intimately connected, would afford an excellent opportunity for indulging in such a train of reflections. But as it is infinitely more important to promote the moral and religious instruction of youth, than to accustom them to political speculations; this view of the subject, however interesting to the legislator and statesman, will be passed over with merely a cursory remark. It is impossible however not to learn from such occurrences, that those public discontents, in which tumults and seditions originate, grow out of a luxurious state of society, and a corrupt form of government; that when a people and their rulers have proceeded to certain lengths in public and private corruption, to attempt their reformation is a hopeless task, and can only bring down speedy and certain ruin on those who undertake it, as appears from the fate of Agis and Cleomenes in Sparta,\* and that of the Gracchi in Rome; and, finally, that the best intentions and purest motives will not justify the adoption of such violent measures, as cannot fail to disturb the peace of society, and to introduce every species of anarchy and confusion.

The more general reflections suggested by the preceding narrative, are the importance of maternal instructions—the frequent disappointment of parental hopes—and the unprofitableness of a life spent in the service of the world.

When it is considered, that the earliest access to the mind is obtained, that the first impressions are made, and that the primary elements of knowledge are communicated, through the medium of maternal tenderness

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\* See Hist. of Greece. Book III. Essay 12.



and affection—it will be felt by all, that too great attention cannot be paid to the nature of those impressions, and the qualities of that knowledge. Since upon these will depend, in a great degree, the character which is formed, and the habits which are preserved through life, it is of the utmost importance, that they be regulated by right principles, and aim at the most excellent objects. Had the accomplished daughter of Scipio Africanus attended to this in the education of her sons, she would have exerted all her influence to curb their youthful ambition, instead of inflaming it, as she is said to have done, by frequently exclaiming, “how long shall I be distinguished in Rome as the mother-in-law of Scipio, rather than as the mother of the Gracchi.” Too late did she arrive at a conviction, that the love of glory, and the desire of popular applause, which she had excited in the breasts of her pupils, and which afterwards she endeavoured in vain to extinguish, were the most fruitful sources of distress to her own mind, and of danger to the children of her fondest hopes. Surely from such an affecting example, Christian parents might derive much useful instruction. Let them communicate no knowledge to their beloved offspring, but that which is purified by the influence of truth and virtue. Let them cherish no dispositions in themselves, nor inculcate any on their children, but those which accord with the spirit of the gospel, and tend to the practice of piety. Let them not form elevated and soaring expectations of worldly distinction and aggrandizement, either for themselves or their youthful charge; lest they, like Cornelia, should plant a sword in their own bowels, and descend to the grave, amidst the utter wreck of all their parental hopes, and domestic comfort.

The lives both of Tiberius and Caius were short, but they were spent, after their education was completed, in the most unwearied and active exertions. And what recompence did they receive—what was the fruit of all their labours? They enjoyed, it is true—if enjoyment it can be called—a popularity, which proved transient as the morning dew. They were applauded, during a few short months or years, by the fickle multitude, to whose service

they had devoted themselves, and of whose caprice they had such painful experience. But, in the hour of danger, they were basely deserted by those in whom they had confided; surrounded by their infuriated adversaries, they were left to perish, unhonoured and unlamented, without one effort having been made for their rescue, or one reward, save that of ignominy and death, having crowned their patriotic efforts. Such methinks are the wages paid by an ungrateful world to her most devoted slaves. How many have toiled in her service from the morning to the evening of life, and have reaped nothing but shame and sorrow, guilt and death! The condition of her wretched votaries is most exactly and beatifully described by the pen of Inspiration; "It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth—but, he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or, as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh—but, he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." Nor is the representation less just and beautiful, which may be gathered from the same sacred source, of their final disappointment and destruction. "The hail shall sweep away their refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow their hiding-place; their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with the grave shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall they be trodden down by it."

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## ESSAY IX.

*On MARIUS and SYLLA.*

FROM A. C. 119—77.

THE golden age of the republic was now past—in which the Roman Senators, answering to their appellation of "*Conscript Fathers*," manifested a paternal regard for the commonwealth—in which the Consuls and Dictators



were elected to their high office, on account of their patriotism and virtue alone, without bribery or corruption—and in which the mutual concessions of the higher and lower classes demonstrated, that both were willing to sacrifice their private interests to the public good. The period on which we are now entering, whether considered with reference to the moral degradation that took place, the atrocities that were practised, or the despotism that prevailed, can only be denominated, the iron age of Rome.

The foreign conquests of the republic, and especially the entire subversion of the Carthaginian and Macedonian empires, had not only elevated her to an unparalleled height of power and opulence; but had also introduced into her counsels and administration every species of political corruption. Together with the wealth which was now poured into her treasury from every quarter of the globe, were imported all the luxuries and vices of the subjugated provinces; till Rome herself had become as venal and corrupt, as the most vitiated and profligate of her fallen rivals. Of the justice of this charge, the facts which will be briefly narrated in the present essay, afford the most demonstrative evidence. Ample and circumstantial as are the records of this most calamitous period, we shall pass as rapidly as possible over the distressing detail of those intrigues, conscriptions, and murders, which were practised by the sanguinary despots, whose names have just been stated.

CAIUS MARIUS was a native of Arpinum, an obscure village in that part of Italy, which had formerly been called Samnium, but was now incorporated into the territories of Rome. He was of lowly origin, and rustic manners; wholly destitute of the advantages of a liberal education; and early trained to the use of arms, the sole employment in which he delighted. His stature was considerably above the ordinary height; his features were stern and ferocious, calculated at once to inspire terror, and excite disgust; his spirit was resolute and inflexible; his ambition, insatiable and boundless. Such was the ruthless barbarian, (for a milder appellation cannot, with justice, be given to him,) who, almost

immediately after the death of the Gracchi, seized upon the helm of state, and tyrannized alike over the Senate and people of Rome. Notwithstanding the obscurity of his birth, he rapidly proceeded, or rather, was borne along by the resistless energy of his character, through all the gradations of civil and military distinction, till he obtained the supreme magistracy, to which, contrary to the laws and usage of the republic, he was elected seven times.

CORNELIUS SYLLA, his younger, but ultimately more successful rival, was of a patrician family, which had formerly held the first offices in the state, but was now impoverished and decayed. Yet from a regard to their former dignity, the parents of Sylla had taken care to educate him in all the learning of Greece and Rome, that he might support in future life the rank to which his promising talents were likely to elevate him. In his youth, he was devoted to gaiety and dissipation, and his early associates were the most dissolute of the Roman citizens. In order to detach him from these pernicious connections, a quæstorship under Marius, (who was at that time engaged in a war with Jugurtha, the king of Numidia,) was obtained for him, and occasioned his first appearance in public. Though wholly unaccustomed to a military life, and at first despised by Marius, as an effeminate and luxurious youth, he soon discovered a capacity, which commanded the respect and confidence of his troops, and awakened the jealousy of the general under whom he served. The learning and eloquence of the Quæstor, which Marius affected to ridicule as beneath the dignity of a soldier, were talents which he frequently found it necessary to employ, and which pointed out Sylla, as the most proper person to conduct conferences and negociations with the enemies of the republic. The success which crowned the diplomatic missions of Sylla, partly eclipsed the military glory of Marius, and laid a foundation for that rivalry, which subsequently proved so disgraceful to themselves, and calamitous to their country.

The *Jugurthine war*, which chiefly owes its celebrity to the talents of those ancient historians, who have so



minutely described all its operations, originated in a quarrel between Adherbal and Hiempsal, the two grandsons of Massinissa; and Jugurtha, the nephew and adopted son of their father Micipsa. These three youths, having been left joint-heirs to the kingdom of Numidia, could not agree on the distribution of its provinces, but referred the question to the Roman senate. Notwithstanding this appeal, Jugurtha treacherously murdered the two princes, who stood in the way of his ambition, and claimed the undivided sovereignty of that wealthy and extensive empire. Relying partly on his address, and partly on his treasures, he first sent commissioners to Rome, and afterwards came in person, to conciliate the leading men in the republic. By lavishing his great wealth upon a few of the principal senators, he gained them over to his interest; but as he was unable to purchase all, or even a majority of that once honourable, but now venal body, he left Rome without having succeeded in his embassy, exclaiming as he passed through its gates, "Here is a city to be sold, if a purchaser could but be found." The conduct of the Numidian war was committed first to Albinus, who was surprised by Jugurtha, and forced into a disgraceful capitulation, which the Roman senate refused to ratify; and afterwards to Metellus, who gained several victories, took all the fortified cities of Numidia, and drove its vanquished monarch into Mauritania. When the last despairing struggle of Jugurtha was about to take place, Metellus was suddenly recalled, and the command given to Marius, at that time a subordinate officer in his army. The vigour of Marius, combined with the dexterity of Sylla, speedily brought the contest to so favourable an issue, that the conquerors had the satisfaction of seeing their adversary conducted to Rome in chains to grace their triumphal procession; after which he was cast into a dungeon, and left to perish for want.

Scarcely had the Jugurthine war terminated, when the Romans were alarmed by the intelligence, that a host of barbarians, belonging to different tribes, but all of whom were known by the common name of Cimbri,

amounting to upwards of 300,000 men, were about to invade Italy. None but Marius was considered equal to the task of encountering this formidable enemy; he was therefore re-elected to the consulship, previously to his return from Africa, in violation both of the laws of the republic, and of ancient usage. No sooner had he entered the city in triumph, on account of his late successes in Numidia and Mauritania, than he marched to meet the Cimbri, whom he completely overthrew in several dreadful battles, with a loss, on the part of the invaders, of 140,000 killed, and 60,000 prisoners. This was quickly followed, by what has been called the *Social war*, in which the struggle was between the Romans and their allies, respecting the right of citizenship. All the Italian states which had been conquered, and incorporated with the empire, laid claim to the privileges and immunities of Roman citizens. In this claim, they were warmly supported by Livius Drusus, who had formerly been the popular antagonist of Caius Gracchus, and who now sought to increase his popularity by obtaining for the discontented allies the freedom of Rome. The project was strenuously opposed both by the senate and people of Rome, who chose rather to engage in a new war—a war with their own subjects—and, in many instances, with their nearest relatives, than to share with them the proud distinction of Roman citizens. This contest proved so arduous, that it became necessary to employ the combined talents of Marius and Sylla, who conducted it with various and doubtful success more than two years, when it was concluded, by conceding to all, except the Samnites and Lucanians, the privileges for which they contended. These two states were excluded from the general indulgence, partly on account of the vigour with which they had entered into the war, and partly, that Sylla, on whom the chief command had devolved, might be honoured with a splendid triumph.

Whilst this destructive contest was proceeding, events took place, which led to the *first Mithridatic war*. Mithridates, the most powerful and warlike of the Asiatic princes, had availed himself of the embarrassed circum-



stances of the Romans, to invade and conquer several of their eastern provinces. He had already added to his hereditary kingdom of Pontus, the extensive provinces of Bithynia, Cappadocia, Thráce, and Macedon, and, in the true spirit of a conqueror, was now proceeding in his march to take possession of Greece. The Romans felt the necessity of bringing the Social war to a speedy termination, that they might be at liberty to employ all their energies and resources in arresting the progress of this eastern conquerer. Sylla, who was at that time the most popular general, was appointed to the command; but Marius, who could not endure the success of his rival, availed himself of his absence, to summon an assembly of the people, and obtain a transfer of the command from Sylla to himself. Neither Sylla, however, nor his army, were disposed to regard the mandates of the Marian faction. On the contrary, that general, having put to death the commissioners who were sent by Marius to deprive him of the command, entered Rome at the head of his legions, dispersed the leaders of that party, and obtained a decree of the Senate, which declared Marius and his most zealous partisans enemies to their country. It was with the utmost difficulty, that Marius and his eldest son effected their escape. This enterprising and hardy veteran, on one occasion, when closely pursued, was constrained to hide himself in the marshes of Minturnum, where he spent the whole night up to his chin in mire and water. On another occasion, when apprehended, and on the point of being executed, he disarmed the slave who was sent into his dungeon to put him to death, by the sternness of his countenance, and the tone of dignity with which he exclaimed, "Who art thou that hast the presumption to kill Caius Marius?" Having contrived to extricate himself from his danger, he passed over into Africa, where he solicited succour from the Roman governor of Carthage, who had once been his friend—but who now denied him even the melancholy gratification of dwelling, a solitary outcast, amidst the ruins of that desolated city.

But to relate all the incredible adventures of this undaunted chief during his exile, would probably be to

indulge imagination at the expence of truth. Suffice it to say, that whilst he was roving in foreign climes, exposed to extreme hardships and dangers, his faction again prevailed at Rome, in consequence of the elevation of Cinna to the consulship; and the exertions of the younger Marius, who had collected a considerable army from different parts of Italy. Marius was recalled, whilst Sylla was carrying on with success the Mithridatic war, and having entered the city at the head of his troops, commenced a career of horrible butchery, to which the history of the world will scarcely furnish a parallel. All who were known, or even suspected to be of Sylla's party, were massacred without distinction. Terror universally prevailed. Even the friends and officers of the inhuman tyrant trembled when they approached him. So practised were his guards in the work of carnage and murder, that they considered even his silence, a warrant to assassinate all whom he did not deign to salute. Many of the most illustrious Senators preferred to perish by their own hands, rather than subject themselves to the indignities and barbarities, which Marius had destined for them. But whilst wading through this sea of blood, the murderer was himself suddenly arrested by the hand of death. Before he expired, he is said to have been a terror to himself. His disordered imagination continually presented to him objects which filled him with the utmost alarm. He seemed constantly to hear sounds reverberated, the import of which was, "Horrid is the dying lion's den." His death took place in the beginning of his seventh consulate, and in the seventieth year of his age.

But his death was far from giving tranquillity and security to Rome. Sylla had been proscribed by Marius as the enemy of Rome, and a price set upon his head. Indignant at this treatment, he concluded hastily the war with Mithridates, in which he had obtained many splendid victories, and brought back his legions laden with spoils, and corrupted by indulgence, to renew the late scenes of carnage, by inflicting summary vengeance upon his enemies. On his return to Rome, he was met by Pompey, who then began to make a figure in the



republic. This celebrated captain had fled from the cruelties of Marius, and now joined the standard of Sylla, with a considerable armed force. Attempts were made by the younger Marius and others, to obstruct the march of Sylla's victorious army, but all were fruitless. After having routed all the armies that were sent to oppose him, he marched to Rome, entered the capitol, and immediately assembled the Senate, who waited in trembling suspense, the commands of the conqueror. Whilst he was calmly haranguing on the late disorders, and the necessity of restoring order and public security, the mingled shrieks and groans of nearly eight thousand prisoners were heard from an adjacent building, whom his soldiers had been instructed to put to the sword. The Senators, greatly terrified by these piercing accents of distress, and ignorant of their cause, started from their seats; but Sylla coldly informed them, that "they only heard the cries of a few wretches, who were suffering the punishment due to their crimes;" and then proceeded in his discourse. A scene of promiscuous murder followed, that baffles all description. The names of multitudes of proscribed persons were publicly exhibited, and rewards offered for their heads; by which means slaves were armed against their masters, children against their parents, and private-individuals authorized to wield the sword of vengeance.

At length Sylla himself was sated with revenge, and the proscription lists were no longer published. But the guilty author of these atrocities felt the necessity of retaining the authority which he had usurped, and therefore appointed himself perpetual Dictator: So completely were the people intimidated by the carnage they had lately witnessed, that they surrendered their liberties to the oppressor almost without a struggle. They saw, with an apathy which was the natural result of the terror that had preceded it, the republican form of government subverted, and a military despotism erected on its ruins. Such however was the caprice of Sylla, that after having retained this usurped dignity two years, he became weary of office, resigned the dictatorship, and voluntarily returned to the station of a private citizen. He even

ventured to challenge an inquiry into his public conduct, by openly declaring that if any Roman citizens were disposed to accuse him before an assembly of the people, he was prepared to defend himself. Whether fear or forbearance influenced them, might perhaps be questioned; it is however agreed, that no prosecution took place, and that Sylla ended his days in retirement. But, though he escaped the vengeance of men, his cruelties met with a remarkable retribution of Providence. The manner and circumstances of his death were most humiliating and distressing; for he is said to have been suddenly seized with an incurable disease, by which he became intolerably loathsome to himself and his friends, long before he expired. The inscription written by himself, and placed upon his tomb, was to the following effect: "Here lies Sylla, whose kindness to his friends and hatred to his enemies was never surpassed."

Plut. in Mar. et Syll. Appian de Bel. Civil. et Mith. Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. Valer. Maxim. Liv. et Ciceron. Oper.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

It is truly lamentable to observe the depreciation which had taken place in the national character of the Romans, at the date of the preceding transactions. In vain should we look at this period for a Cincinnatus, a Fabricius, or a Regulus—men who could with difficulty be induced to quit their beloved retirement, in order to guide the helm of state—who were content at the expiration of their office to return to the lowly walks of life, with no other reward than the satisfaction of having served their country—and whose incorruptible fidelity disdained a bribe, by whomsöever it might be offered. A new race had now arisen, consisting of men of degenerate principles and depraved habits, whose character fully justified the satire of Jugurtha, when he represented the whole city as exhibited for sale. Who can



wonder that such a people should be the prey of every despot, and that the Roman Senate, which, in its pristine purity, had made the most powerful monarchs tremble on their thrones, should, in its turn, tremble and turn pale at the frown of an oppressor? Who can wonder, that, in such a time of public degeneracy, the appalling spectacle of a Marius and Sylla should obtrude itself upon our sight; men who, to gratify their insatiable ambition or private revenge, could wade through seas of blood—the blood of their fellow-citizens? So have promising and hopeful youths, not unfrequently been vitiated by degrees; they have proceeded from one species of vice and profligacy to another, till they have become the pests of society, and have “treasured up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath.” Thus too have many apostatised from a zealous profession of religion, and, after having pressed forward to the farthest verge of guilt, have terminated their course in infamy and ruin.

The two characters, whose destructive rivalry has been adverted to in the preceding narrative, were in some respects widely different, and in others exactly similar. Marius was rude and uncultivated, but Sylla polished and refined—Marius despised literature, and gloried in his ignorance; Sylla was distinguished by his learning and accomplishments even from the most eloquent and learned of his contemporaries—Marius was of austere and self-denying habits, averse from all indulgence, either in himself or others; but Sylla was, through life, luxurious and dissipated, the associate of the profligate and gay, devoted to amusements and pleasure of every description. Yet though the birth and education, the early principles and habits of these candidates for fame were thus opposite, they were alike ambitious, revengeful, sanguinary, and despotic. Their administrations were equally characterized by injustice, and wanton barbarity; nor would it be easy to determine which proved the greatest scourge to his desolated country. O how fearful must be the prospect of eternity to such monsters of iniquity! What wonder that *they* should be terrors to themselves, who have been curses to mankind—that all the scorpions of a guilty conscience should pursue them to their retirements,

and urge them on to desperation—that the recollections of former crimes, like horrid spectres should haunt their midnight hours, surround the bed of death, and pursue them to their dreary tombs. The horror of mind that preceded the death of Marius resembled indeed, but could not equal, the fearfulness and trembling, the terror and amazement, that shall seize the hypocrite in Zion, the formalist in religion, and all who have despised the gospel, in the day of final wrath, when they shall be paralyzed with the fearful expectation of judgment, and of fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversaries of God!

From the preceding facts it appears that the Sovereign of the Universe, in the righteous dispensations of his providence, frequently makes the wicked scourges to each other, even in their present state of existence. Those who had been most active in promoting the murder of the Gracchi and their partisans, were the first victims of the Marian faction; and these inhuman wretches, whom Marius had employed in executing his purposes of revenge, were themselves massacred by Sylla and his accomplices. How easily can the God of Vengeance let loose all those ferocious passions, which would deluge the earth with blood; and render men more destructive to each other than the most savage beasts of prey! Without employing any additional instruments of wrath, if sinners were left to be their own tormentors—given up to the tyranny of lust, the frenzy of passion, and the malignity of revenge—this would suffice to transform them into furies, and render the world which we inhabit an Aceldama, a Golgotha, a “lake of fire and brimstone!” It is, however, matter of thankfulness that these agents of desolation are checked in their wildest career by Him, “who rules the raging of the sea, who stilleth the noise of its waves, and the tumult of the people.” He causes even “the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of that wrath He will restrain.” Marius was cut off by death, whilst his schemes of ambition were yet incomplete, and his work of destruction unfinished. Sylla was induced to stay his vengeful hand, and sheath his blood-stained sword, not from tenderness, or remorse, but by the



irresistible, though secret influence, of that Power, which shuts up the sea with doors, and hath said to its boisterous billows, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

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## ESSAY X.

*On the circumstances which led to the FIRST TRIUM-  
VIRATE.*

FROM A. C. 77—59.

THE death of Marius and Sylla, left a wide field open to the ambition of new adventurers, many of whom eagerly pressed forward to occupy their elevated stations. Recent events had shewn that it was possible to maintain the forms of the republic, by continuing to nominate Tribunes and Consuls as aforetime; whilst, in reality, an artful individual might exercise the most absolute and despotic authority over the property and lives of his fellow-subjects. Several Romans, whose names are more or less known to posterity, in proportion to the success of their enterprises, manifested a disposition to repeat this experiment, by seizing upon the vacant helm, and attempting to usurp the government of the empire. The first of these was Lepidus, who had been elected to the consulship in the year of Sylla's death; and who, immediately after that event, gathered together the remains of the Marian faction, by whose popularity and influence, he hoped to establish himself in the government. But, as he was marching to Rome at the head of his army, he was met, and totally defeated by Pompey, who had been commissioned by the Roman Senate to take measures for the safety of the republic. The next competitor who entered the lists, was Sertorius, who, though a comparatively obscure character, established himself in Spain, and raised an army so numerous, and so devoted to his

interests, that neither Metellus nor Pompey could subdue him, without having recourse to assassination. Whilst these operations were proceeding in Spain, a war broke out in Italy, which, though small in its beginnings, greatly alarmed the Senate, and obliged them to send Crassus, one of their ablest officers, to quell it. This was called the *Servile war*, which originated in the revolt of a few gladiators, who chose one of their party, named SPARTACUS, to command them; and who were quickly joined by an immense number of slaves from every part of Italy, and several other Roman provinces. It was with great difficulty that Crassus, though an experienced and skilful general, reduced them to subjection, after a succession of dreadful battles. Six thousand wretched slaves, who were taken prisoners by Crassus, are said to have been crucified by his orders between Capua and Rome. An *ovation*, or lesser triumph, was decreed to the generals, by whose valour and skill, this alarming revolt had been brought to so prosperous an issue; in the honours of which Pompey shared, on account of his having fallen in with, and put to the sword, a numerous corps of these armed slaves, on his return from Spain. This circumstance laid the foundation of a jealousy between Pompey and Crassus, which threatened to involve the republic in a new civil war. Each of these generals was at the head of a numerous army, and each refused to obey the Senate's mandate to disband their troops. At length, however, matters were compromised without appealing to the sword, and both these rival statesmen were unanimously elected to the consulship.

In the discharge of this office, Pompey and Crassus severally aimed at increasing their popularity, but by very different means. Crassus, whose wealth was incalculable, lavished it upon the common people in large donatives and splendid feasts—but Pompey pursued a surer method, by repealing several of the most arbitrary and oppressive laws, which Sylla had introduced, and restoring to the people some of those rights of which he had deprived them. These popular measures gave him so great an influence over the minds of the common people, that the highest honours were awarded him,



and the most important offices entrusted to his management. As a proof of the confidence reposed in him, the whole government of Asia, and the command of the armies sent thither to oppose Mithridates and Tigranes, the kings of Pontus and Armenia, were committed to him alone. The conduct of this war, (one of the most remote and hazardous in which the Romans had yet embarked,) served greatly to augment the fame of Pompey, and in an equal proportion to increase the envy of his political rival. After a severe but unavailing struggle, the unhappy Mithridates, having been betrayed by one of his children, and deserted by his troops, was induced to destroy himself, that he might avoid the disgrace of appearing in the triumphal procession of his conqueror. After his death, Pompey proceeded in a rapid career of victory, till he had vanquished Tigranes, and overrun the provinces of Armenia, Syria, Media, Parthia, and Arabia, which were now formed into Roman provinces. It was about this time that this celebrated warrior is supposed to have invaded Judæa, and invested Jerusalem. After a siege of three months, that city was taken, and its ancient walls were demolished; but the temple, and all its sacred utensils, with the treasures of gold and silver it contained, were suffered to remain unappropriated. The curiosity of the Roman general led him personally to visit that sacred edifice, of which he had undoubtedly heard much; and minutely to examine, not only the outer courts which alone were accessible to strangers, but also the court of the priests, and even the *Holy of Holies*, which none but the High Priest of JEHOVAH was permitted to enter. This profanation of their temple incensed the whole nation of the Jews against Pompey, who had in all other respects treated them with great lenity; and rendered them exceedingly disaffected to the Roman government.

Having thus terminated, what were called by the historians of those times, *the second and third Mithridatic wars*, Pompey returned to Italy, to make preparations for the most splendid triumph which Rome had ever witnessed. The procession lasted two days, and dazzled the eyes of the spectators with the glitter of wealth and

pageantry, which was exhibited on that occasion.—The conqueror boasted of having destroyed or taken during the war, more than two millions of his fellow-mortals—of having captured or burnt upwards of fifteen hundred cities—of having annexed to the Roman empire twelve new provinces—and of having subjugated the whole of Asia by his victorious arms. This prodigious display of wealth and increase of territory, greatly endeared the general, whose talents had obtained them, to the Roman people, who were now become as covetous, as they had formerly been ambitious. But the Senate, who considered him far too powerful and popular for the safety of the commonwealth, and who were offended by his frequent violation of their supposed rights, began from that time to incline to the interests of Crassus, who alone had sufficient influence in the state to counteract his public measures. Their object was to keep alive the resentments, and inflame the jealousy of these two political rivals; convinced that so long as they formed opposite parties, the liberties of Rome were secure; but, if once they became united in their interests and exertions, the commonwealth must fall.

It was not however from this quarter alone that danger had been apprehended. During the absence of Pompey, a formidable conspiracy had been detected, and its principal agents punished by Cicero, the celebrated Roman orator, of whose character and life a more extended statement will be given in a subsequent essay. The author of this sedition, was Cataline, a Roman of illustrious birth, but of excessively immoral habits; who, when quite a youth, was charged with the most atrocious crimes, and whose example had corrupted many of the most distinguished patrician families. His intention was secretly to collect an army from the most populous and disaffected Italian cities; after which, his infamous associates in Rome, were, on a signal given, to set fire to the city at midnight in several places; to murder Cicero, who was at that time Consul, and several other patriotic senators; and to force open the gates of the city. Cataline proposed to be in readiness immediately to occupy the capital with his troops, and repeat the tragedy of



murders and proscriptions, which Sylla had so lately performed. The whole of this infernal scheme was defeated by the vigilance and undaunted patriotism of Cicero, who secured the principal conspirators resident in the city, before their project was ripe for execution; and sent his consular colleague Antonius with a sufficient force to encounter that which Cataline had raised. He also obtained a decree of the Senate for the immediate execution of the ringleaders, and thus saved his country from all the horrors of a second proscription. For this signal service, the Consul was greeted both by the senate and people of Rome with the appellation of "Father of his country;" a name which even Pompey *the Great*, might have justly envied.

About this time another and yet more celebrated actor made his appearance at Rome, and performed a principal part in the drama of public affairs. This was CAIUS JULIUS CÆSAR, who was born in the ninety-eighth year before the Christian æra, descended from an ancient patrician family, educated by his mother Aurelia, and nearly related to Caius Marius. On this latter account he was proscribed by Sylla, and narrowly escaped the vengeance of that inhuman Dictator; who on one occasion fixed his eye upon him, and remarked to some of his attendants, "There is many a Marius in that youth." After Sylla's death, Cæsar signalized himself by the boldness with which he espoused the cause of his deceased relative; setting up statues in different parts of the city in honour of Marius, and delivering funeral orations at the death of his widow and children. To gratify the people, he frequently exhibited shows of gladiators at great expence, and distributed most liberally of his substance to the poorer class of Roman citizens. In early youth, he devoted himself to those studies which were favourable to the cultivation of eloquence, and received lessons on rhetoric from the most distinguished masters of that art. His proficiency was so great, that he became one of the most insinuating and impressive orators of which Rome could boast, even in her best days. His literary taste did not, however, prevent him from commencing at the usual age his military career,

and distinguishing himself as much in the Roman camp as he had done in the forum. Having fulfilled the office of prætor in Spain, and performed services there which were deemed worthy of a triumph, he returned to Rome, not indeed, like Pompey, laden with spoils, but covered with the laurels of victory, and greeted with the acclamations of thousands of his fellow-citizens.

On his arrival in Italy, Cæsar conceived the design of making the jealousies of Pompey and Crassus subservient to his own elevation. For this purpose he insinuated himself with such consummate address into the friendship and confidence of both these leaders of the republic, that they were induced to co-operate in supporting his pretensions to the consulship. Nor was he satisfied with having succeeded in this instance, but he projected and ultimately accomplished a more intimate union between himself, and these powerful rivals, whom he persuaded to lay aside for a time their mutual differences, and unite with himself in forming a triple league, in which it was stipulated that nothing should be done in the commonwealth without their joint approbation; and thus they virtually transferred to themselves the sovereignty of Rome. This coalition was called the *First Triumvirate*, and was formed between Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus; not for patriotic purposes, but from motives of private ambition, and personal aggrandizement. Each member of the Triumvirate professed indeed to sacrifice his own interests for the public good, but in reality the design of the league was to secure to themselves the continuance of power and dignity, at the expence and by the subversion of the commonwealth. How far this alliance answered the interested purposes of its projectors, will appear from the facts contained in the next essay.

Plut. in vit. Pomp. Cicer. et Cæs. Ciceron. Oper. Sallust. Hist. Vell. Patere. Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. &c.



## REFLECTIONS.

The preceding facts are deeply interesting, inasmuch as they develop somewhat of the interior of those characters who resign themselves to the lust of power, and the pride of life. Unhappy mortals! amidst all the pomp of your triumphs, and the glitter of your wealth accumulated by rapine and extortion, how far are ye from the enjoyment of peace and satisfaction of mind? What perpetual restlessness—what ceaseless machinations—what perilous intrigues—what heart-devouring jealousies, compose your secret history! Who that knows the felicity of a tranquil mind—a mind free from the solitudes and perils of worldly ambition—would envy your lot, or wish to embark with you on so tempestuous a sea! Yet would we catch somewhat of your ardour in the pursuit of nobler objects, and a brighter crown; of you we would learn how to run with unwearied patience, and unconquerable zeal, “the race that is set before us;” and, by your example, who are competitors for worldly fame, we would be stimulated to contend earnestly for the “prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It is gratifying to the benevolent mind to reflect, that in this nobler contest the success of one does not involve the failure of the rest. In the struggle maintained by rival statesmen or warriors, the elevation of one is purchased for the most part by the depression of all his competitors. If Sylla rise, Marius must fall: if Cæsar succeed in his ambitious projects, it must be by hurling Pompey and Crassus and Cicero, together with all the train of his less fortunate rivals, from their several stations of dignity and power. But it is far otherwise in the career of christian ambition; for all who are fellow-candidates for a celestial crown, may hope to share in the same honours, and receive the same glorious reward. They have every inducement to become helpers of each other’s faith, and to assist in bearing one another’s burdens. Their christian calling, far from exciting a spirit of rivalry, and cherishing invidious jealousies between

brethren, forbids, represses, and finally subdues them. A Paul and a Peter—a James and a John, could cordially co-operate in the labours, and share in the distinguished honours of the Apostleship, without wishing to establish their reputation, or extend their usefulness at each other's expence.

The splendid conquests of Pompey in Asia possess little interest, unless when considered as preparations for the coming of Christ in the flesh. Viewed in this connection, they rise in magnitude and importance far above all the ordinary exploits of military heroes and conquerors. The scene was now about to open, towards which the faith of Patriarchs, Prophets, and holy men of old, had been directed for many ages; and which, when developed, would fill with astonishment both men and angels. The time—the set time was at hand, in which the promised Messiah should make his appearance amongst men. Some steps were previously necessary in order to the fulfilment of prophecy, and the execution of the divine decrees. Some instruments were to be raised up “to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make straight in the desert a high-way for our God.” Amongst these unconscious agents of divine providence, Pompey was unquestionably one, as Cyrus had been in former ages. For it had been predicted of old, that “the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, till Shiloh should come.” A special providence had therefore continually watched over the Jewish nation, and amidst all their calamities, had still preserved amongst them, (and that too in the line of Judah,) the forms of an independent civil government. But now that the glorious personage, to whom that prophecy referred, was at hand; it became necessary that the Jews should be a conquered and tributary people—that they should lose their national independence—and that strangers should rule over them. This prediction was evidently fulfilled, when Judæa, in consequence of the conquests of Pompey, became subject to the jurisdiction of prætors and governors appointed by the Roman Senate. On this account many pious Jews, who were conversant with the Holy Scriptures, and were anxiously



“waiting for the consolation of Israel,” formed at that time, an expectation that the promised Shiloh was about to appear. Nor is it improbable that this heathen conqueror was permitted to profane the hallowed temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, by entering even into its most holy place, in order that the attention and veneration of the Jewish people might be gradually withdrawn from the building to Him, who was about suddenly to come to his temple, and who would shortly fill that sacred edifice with the divine splendour of his miracles.

The triple league which was formed at Rome between Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, shews that “the children of this world are frequently wiser in their generation than the children of light.” They can, from selfish motives and with interested views, consent to forget their mutual differences, to bury their animosities and jealousies, at least for a time, that they may strengthen their influence, and extend their authority. And shall not the disciples of Him, who is emphatically styled, “the Prince of Peace,” much rather unite and co-operate for the promotion of those interests which ought to be far dearer to them than any personal advantage? With how much greater cordiality and energy should they enter into a sacred league, to “walk together in all the laws and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly,” and to execute those designs that are likely to increase the commonwealth of Israel! In proportion as the bond of union is more sacred, and the objects for which they unite are more glorious, it may justly be expected that the alliance should be more cordial, permanent, and beneficial.

## ESSAY XI.

*On the Civil War between POMPEY and CÆSAR.*

FROM A. C. 59—47.

IT was stated in the last essay, that one object proposed by Cæsar in forming the Triumvirate, was to secure to himself the Consulship. Strengthened by this secret alliance, it was not difficult to secure that object, though many circumstances were unfavourable to his hopes. The Senate was decidedly adverse to him, as a descendant of Marius, and a favourite of the people. The tide of popularity still ran high in favour of Pompey, even amongst the lower classes of citizens, who were dazzled by the splendour of his victories, and attracted by the pomp of his triumphs. Yet no sooner had Cæsar obtained his election, than he proposed a succession of popular laws, which so completely gained him the hearts of the people, that he became from that time their idol, and was able to set the Senate at defiance. About the same time, he strengthened his influence in the state, by marrying Calpurnia, the daughter of Calpurnius Piso, the new Consul elect, and by giving his own daughter Julia in marriage to Pompey. In order that no obstacle to his ambition might remain, he contrived to procure the exile of Cicero, and to remove Cato to the island of Cyprus, both of whom were unyielding patriots, whose eloquence he feared, and whose vigilance he could not hope to escape. Having thus arranged the domestic concerns of the republic, the three Sovereigns of Rome proceeded to divide between them the government of the provinces. Pompey chose Spain, with its dependencies; Crassus preferred the wealthy provinces of Asia; but Cæsar undertook the more perilous and less productive prætorship of Gaul.

A breach was shortly afterwards made in the Triumvirate by the death of Crassus, who was killed in a battle with the Parthians, together with the flower of



his army. Cæsar, in the mean time, was fully occupied in Gaul with subduing the barbarous tribes that inhabited those yet uncultivated regions. The Helvetii, the Belgæ, the Nervii, the Suevi, and many others, were successively conquered by his arms; nor did even these conquests satisfy his boundless ambition; for, before the expiration of his prætorship, which had now continued nearly nine years, he passed over into Britain, and reduced part of that island under the Roman yoke. The skill, the courage, the success, which had marked the military career of this distinguished general, greatly increased his reputation and influence at Rome; where Pompey had remained during his absence, to maintain tranquillity and prevent the growth of faction in the state. Hitherto Pompey had been so well satisfied with his own fame, that he was little disposed to be jealous of that of Cæsar; but now he began to take alarm. He apprehended that the glory of his younger rival would soon eclipse that which he had formerly acquired by his Asiatic expeditions. He therefore endeavoured indirectly to diminish the influence, and lower the reputation of his absent colleague. The death of his wife Julia, Cæsar's daughter, to whom he was most warmly attached, which took place about this time, rent asunder the only remaining tie, by which he was bound to that rival chief. It now became evident, that a struggle would ere long commence, between the conqueror of Asia, and of the Gauls—between Pompey, who was now considered as the pillar of the Senate, and Cæsar, who had become more than ever the favourite of the people. The former, who well knew that he had most to fear from the attachment of Cæsar's army to their general, prevailed upon the Senate to recall him from his government, and require him to disband his troops; but the latter, who also knew that an army devoted to his interests was a surer ground of dependence than popular favour, refused to comply with these injunctions. There was, however, a moderate party, at the head of whom was Cicero, who had been recalled from exile through the influence of Pompey, and whose sincere desire and earnest endeavour it was to reconcile both parties, and save the republic from the

calamities of civil war. The exertions of this pacific party delayed, but could not prevent, an open rupture. The breach gradually widened; the partisans of Pompey and of Cæsar became more hostile; and every thing indicated the approach of a tremendous storm.

At length the Consuls and Senate, who were supposed to act under the influence of Pompey, proceeded so far as to resolve that Cæsar should on a certain day transfer the command of his army, to a successor nominated by themselves, or be accounted a public enemy. This was a signal for the immediate commencement of hostilities. Cæsar concluded that it was the design of his adversaries first to reduce him to the condition of a private citizen, and then to effect his destruction. Instead therefore of submitting to the requisition of the Senate, he assembled his veteran legions, and marched them with incredible promptitude into Italy, all whose principal cities opened their gates to receive him. Pompey seems to have been surprised by the decision and celerity of Cæsar's movements; and, finding it impossible to make an effectual stand in Italy, hastily embarked at Brundisium with all his troops and military stores. His adversary was unable to follow for want of an adequate fleet, and therefore directed his course to the metropolis, with the intention of seizing upon the wealth of the public treasury for the payment of his troops. A feeble resistance was attempted by the official guardians of these national treasures, but Cæsar laying his hand upon his sword, repeated the demand in a tone of authority, that could not be disobeyed. The possession of this valuable fund enabled him to proceed in the war with fresh vigour. He first conducted his army into Spain, where he subdued two of Pompey's lieutenants stationed in that country; and then passed over into Greece, to decide the contest between Pompey and himself by attacking his rival in his strong holds. The interval of rest, which Cæsar's absence had afforded to Pompey, had not been lost by that general. He had exerted himself to collect from all the tributary provinces of Asia and Greece a numerous and well-appointed army; and to form alliances with those princes, whose wealth or power was likely to increase his re-



sources. So successful was he in these applications, that, previously to Cæsar's arrival in Greece, he had secured a fleet and army far superior in numbers and strength to any which his rival could bring against him; and so confident were the principal Roman Senators of his final success in the war, that upwards of two hundred of them repaired to his camp. Amongst these were Cicero and Cato, two of the most distinguished patriots of that day, who had long endeavoured to moderate the violence of parties, but had at length resolved to attach themselves to the interests of Pompey, from whose vanity they apprehended less danger to the republic, than from the boundless ambition of Cæsar.

It was felt on both sides that the utmost vigilance and caution would be necessary. Each of the generals was too well acquainted with the military science and skill of his antagonist, to treat him with contempt, or to admit of a presumptuous security. After the hostile armies approached each other, neither of the commanders seemed inclined to strike the first blow. Both repeatedly drew up in order of battle, and again retired without coming to an engagement. It was evidently the design of Pompey, who was well furnished with abundant supplies, to protract the contest, with the hope of exhausting the resources of his adversary. Cæsar, on the other hand, watched for an opportunity of taking his opponent by surprise, and obliging him to risk a battle on unequal terms. After much generalship had been displayed on either side, and a considerable period of comparative inaction had elapsed, Cæsar was driven to the necessity of fighting under disadvantageous circumstances; and was not only defeated with great loss, but in imminent danger of losing his whole army. This defeat, which seemed at the time so adverse to the interests of Cæsar, proved eventually the principal cause of his success. From that period both Pompey and his officers despised their formidable antagonist, and anticipated with the utmost confidence his complete overthrow. Already they began to divide amongst them the honours of the state, and made applications for the possessions of Cæsar's adherents. This confidence was increased by the flatteries

of the augurs and aruspices, all of whom made their court to Pompey, by assuring him that the omens were all favourable, and that his success was certain.

After having been separated by the late defeat, the two armies again approached each other upon the memorable plains of Pharsalia. A disposition was equally felt by both parties to bring on a general engagement, which should decide, whether Pompey or Cæsar, should have the empire of the world. At length the day of battle arrived—all that combined valour and skill could effect, was exerted on that eventful day—the balance hung suspended for a short time, and then turned so decidedly in favour of Cæsar, that his adversary's army was completely routed, and his camp taken with all its abundant stores. Towards the close of the engagement, Pompey fled precipitately, and in disguise, to the sea coast, where he found a merchant's vessel ready to sail, which he immediately entered with about twenty of his followers. Cæsar, in the mean time, exerted all his influence to prevent an unnecessary effusion of blood. He straitly charged his ardent legions to spare their fellow-citizens, and rather to permit their escape, than put them to the sword. He shewed the utmost lenity to the prisoners, giving them, in most instances, their liberty, and even restoring to them their property. This conduct, which was no less politic than humane, induced the greater part of the senators who had joined Pompey's standard, to make their peace with the conqueror. Cicero, C. Cassius, M. Brutus, and many others of less distinction, now submitted to Cæsar, who received them with the utmost kindness and affection.

The vanquished general pursued his flight towards Egypt, where he hoped to find an asylum in the court of Ptolemy, who had professed the warmest friendship towards him, and promised him ample supplies, both of provisions and money, whenever they should be necessary. On his way thither, he called at Mitylene, to take on board his wife Cornelia, who had been indulging the fondest dreams of hope and ambition during his absence, all of which had now vanished. Melancholy was the interview that took place on this occasion, in which both



parties inveighed in the bitterest terms against the injustice of Providence, and complained of the hardness of their lot. In these murmurs and lamentations, the remaining days of their voyage were consumed; nor did they cease from these mutual and unavailing regrets, till they were again torn from each other's arms, to meet no more. The perfidious Ptolemy, influenced by his time-serving courtiers, resolved on purchasing the favour of Cæsar, by the murder of his rival. In pursuance of this design, he sent some of his principal officers to meet him before he landed, at whose invitation, Pompey left his own vessel and his few faithful attendants, to place himself under their protection; by whom he was basely assassinated, as soon as he had reached the shore. His head was immediately severed from his body, by order of the king, that it might be presented to Cæsar; who is said, when he saw it, to have bathed it with his tears, and bitterly reproached the perfidious monsters, who perpetrated the crime.

The wife and companions of Pompey were sufficiently near to witness the tragic scene, but too distant to afford assistance, and too weak to avenge his death. They could only express the anguish of their minds, by shrieks, and groans, and floods of tears; till a sense of personal danger constrained them to flee from the treacherous coast with all possible speed. Two obscure individuals who had formerly served in Pompey's army performed the funeral rites which were customary in that age, by erecting a pile, and burning his body, which had been left exposed upon the sea shore. One of the historians of that age has recorded an inscription, which was afterwards written upon his tomb, to the following effect. "How lowly a grave contains the ashes of the hero, to whose honour temples were once erected!"

Cæsar. de Bell. Civil. Plut. de Pomp. Sueton. de Jul. Cæs.  
Cicero. Epist. Vell. Patere. &c.

## REFLECTIONS.

Such was the miserable end of Pompey the Great! Thus terminated all the series of his victories and triumphs, his political intrigues, and his military exploits! But a short time had elapsed, since all Italy poured forth vows and prayers for his safety, when his life was threatened by an alarming sickness—since monarchs bowed to his authority, and held their diadems by his permission—and since myriads flocked to his standard, and professed a willingness to devote their lives to his service. But now, how altered his condition! A wretched solitary outcast—destitute of consolation, and cut off from all hope—he is deserted, betrayed, murdered, and denied even the common rites of burial; or, as it has been forcibly expressed by an ancient historian, “he that conquered the world, can scarcely find a narrow grave.” O! what a lesson does this read to the vain, the proud, the ambitious of mankind! What valuable instruction might his celebrated rival have derived from this catastrophe, had he been truly wise to profit by it! It would indeed seem impossible that any should contemplate such an affecting instance of the vanity of human greatness, without some moral improvement. “Is such” the youthful inquirer may well exclaim, “is such the honour which men receive one of another? why then should it be so eagerly coveted? Are these the prizes for which the votaries of ambition contend so earnestly? away then ye phantoms, utterly unworthy of the pursuit of immortal beings! Let the potsherds of the earth strive together for these shadowy forms of bliss!

No longer will I ask your love,  
Nor seek your friendship more;  
The happiness that I approve  
Lies not within your power.”

The last essay exhibited Pompey and Cæsar, associated with a third political combatant, in a triple league of amity and friendship. They joined hand in hand, to



carry into effect their ambitious projects. They united their exertions to enslave their country, and elevate themselves upon the ruins of the commonwealth. The present essay has exhibited the dissolution of that league, by the death of two of its members. We have seen that professed friendship turned into enmity—the swords which were to have been drawn for each other's protection, dyed in each other's blood—and the armies, which were designed to encounter the common foe, drawn up in battle array, to exterminate one another. Such has ever been the friendship of the wicked. Nor can we wonder that alliances, founded in pride and selfishness, should thus terminate in hatred and cruelty, injustice and oppression. The workers of iniquity may find it convenient for a short time to strengthen each other's hands, but no sooner are their selfish views accomplished, than the bond is dissolved which united them together, and they become objects of suspicion and hatred to each other. Far different will be the friendship, which is founded in piety, and cemented by holiness. Private interest will then be cheerfully sacrificed to mutual advantage—selfishness will give place to pure and exalted benevolence—all who are joined in this sacred league will love one another with pure hearts fervently, and their friendship will continue to bloom for ever.

How many, like the unfortunate general, whose fall has been related, have owed their disgrace and ruin to the confidence which prosperity inspires, or rather, to the false security which it engenders! Their substance increases, their worldly comforts abound; and therefore, they persuade themselves that all is well. But assuredly there is no period in which we have greater need to watch and pray, than that in which our external circumstances are most prosperous, and our hearts most secure. Those who imagine that a temptation, once successfully resisted, is subdued, fall into a mistake, which may prove as fatal as that of Pompey, when he concluded, that one defeat of Cæsar had decided the controversy, and ensured his final success. If there be an adversary whom we are inclined to despise, we may rest assured, that is the quarter from which most danger

is to be apprehended. So long as Pompey and his officers appreciated the talents and skill of their formidable antagonist, they were vigilant, and their vigilance rendered them invincible: but no sooner did they conceive a contempt for Cæsar and his legions, than they became their easy prey. Let us therefore, as we would finally overcome temptation, not be high-minded, but fear; for “pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

How forlorn is the condition of those, who in the day of their adversity have no confidence towards God, no reliance upon his providence and grace! In vain do they attempt to lean upon an arm of flesh—in vain do they seek consolation from the embraces of their most endeared relatives—in vain do they apply for succour to their most powerful and prosperous friends. Miserable comforters are they all in the hour of trial, and delusive the confidence which is reposed in them. Associates in punishment may indeed augment each other's sufferings by inveighing against the dispensations of the Almighty as cruel and unjust, and by their incessant murmurs and lamentations; but they know not how to soothe, to console, to support their companions in tribulation. None but those who have tasted of the springs of divine comfort, are “able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort, wherewith they themselves are comforted of God.”

But “wherefore doth a living man complain—a man for the punishment of his sins?” Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God—that chargest the righteous judge of all the earth with injustice and severity—that criest in the tone of fretfulness and impatience, “my punishment is heavier than I can bear?” Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God? “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.”



## ESSAY XII.

*On the Character and Death of CATO.*

BORN A. C. 94. DIED A. C. 45.

MARCUS PORCIUS CATO, who has been usually distinguished from other Roman senators of the same name, by being called Cato of Utica, was descended from the Censor, mentioned in a former essay, as having been the principal cause of the destruction of Carthage.\* Porcius seems to have inherited the disposition, and studied attentively the character of his celebrated ancestor. Like him, he possessed an inflexibility of mind, which was clearly indicated by the austere gravity of his deportment, and the stern composure of his countenance. Even in his childhood; he seemed incapable of fear; no threats could intimidate, no persuasives withdraw him from his purpose. He early accustomed himself to endure fatigue, to suffer hardships, and to encounter dangers; that he might be better able to sustain in future life the privations and sufferings to which he might be exposed. These youthful habits are partly to be attributed to his admiration of the supposed virtues of the elder Cato, and partly to the instructions of his philosophical preceptor, Antipater of Tyre, who was of the sect of the Stoics. By that philosopher, he was early initiated into all the mysteries of stoicism, and from him all the tenets were imbibed peculiar to that austere school. After a sufficient basis had been laid in philosophical science, he applied himself to the study of eloquence, as the most effectual means of securing his future advancement. From the schools of philosophy and rhetoric, he proceeded to the Roman army, where he first served as a volunteer under Gellius in the Servile War, and afterwards as legionary tribune under Rubrius in Macedon. Here he was chiefly remarkable for the affected plainness of his

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\* Rom. Hist. Book II. Essay 7.

dress, which formed a striking contrast to the dignity of his manners; and for the blended severity and kindness of his conduct to the soldiers under his command. Notwithstanding his strict attention to military discipline, he acquired such an ascendancy over the affections of his men, that when he retired from public service, their adieus were mingled with their tears.

Having left the army for a time, he travelled through Greece, and a considerable part of Asia, that he might study the varieties of national character, and observe the customs that prevailed in those countries. From this tour, he returned more disgusted than ever with the pomp of courts, the adulation of courtiers, and the gilded chains of despotism. He perceived in the luxurious cities of the East, and especially in Antioch, the debasing influence of opulence and dissipation, preparing their inhabitants for slavery and oppression. On his arrival at Rome, he was chosen Quæstor, an office which afforded him many opportunities for attempting the reform of public abuses. In the discharge of this and every succeeding office, he particularly opposed himself to every species of bribery; and prosecuted, with unrelenting severity, all who were detected in that crime. During the consulship of Cicero, he rendered an essential service to his country, by contributing towards the discovery of Cataline's conspiracy, and the punishment of the most notorious delinquents. Equally suspicious of the intrigues of Pompey and Cæsar, he steadfastly opposed himself to their elevation, and attempted to restrain both the Senate and people in their applause of these distinguished warriors. In the aristocratical splendour of the former, no less than in the soaring ambition of the latter, he discerned an influence, which threatened to subvert the commonwealth. It was therefore his first object to restore the Senate to its ancient dignity and power; in order that an effectual balance might be produced between popular anarchy and the tyranny of ambition. In the commencement of the civil war, he maintained a strict neutrality, and joined his efforts to those of Cicero, who strenuously aimed at conciliating the rival chiefs. But when it became necessary to decide



between the two parties, though courted, flattered, and even caressed by Cæsar, he resolved to attach himself to Pompey; nor did he forsake the standard of that unfortunate general, when, after the battle of Pharsalia, most of the Senators who were found in his camp, submitted to the conqueror. He collected the wreck of Pompey's army, conducted them to the island of Corcyra, and placed them under the command of Pompey the younger, whom he earnestly exhorted to maintain the contest, whatever might be its issue. Encouraged by the presence and counsels of so distinguished a senator, the son of Pompey entered the lists, and eagerly rushed to the combat, though with unequal forces, yet with an undaunted mind.

The seat of war was now removed from Asia to Africa, where, after the death of Pompey, those who were still determined to carry on the war, concentrated their forces, and assembled in council. The place of conference was Utica, and the principal members of the council were Cn. Pompey, Cato, Labienus, and Scipio; to these was added Juba, the king of Numidia, who had recently joined the league, and brought with him a numerous army. Cæsar, with that promptitude and decision which characterized all his military enterprises, quickly followed them; and, after having sustained some partial defeats, succeeded in putting Scipio and Juba to flight, occupying their strong holds, and terminating the war. The circumstances which attended the conclusion of this war, and especially those which relate to the death of Cato, are of so remarkable a nature, that a more detailed statement of these occurrences will be allowed, and may not be unprofitable.

After the total overthrow of the combined armies of Scipio and Juba in the battle of Thapsus, and the capture of that city, there remained nothing to employ the legions of Cæsar, but the reduction of Utica, a strong fortress, defended by a numerous garrison, with Cato at their head. It was the design of this invincible patriot to defend this post to the last, and rather to bury himself beneath its ruins than submit to the conqueror; but when Cæsar approached at the head of his veteran

legions, all but the patriotic chief were horror-stricken, and only thought of obtaining the most favourable terms of surrender. Perceiving that no dependence could be placed either on the inhabitants of Utica, or on the troops collected to defend it, Cato gave private instructions to his friends, and especially to the senators who had formed his council, to effect their escape with all possible expedition and secrecy. For himself he avowed his determination to await the issue, assuring them that he would never so far degrade himself as to become Cæsar's slave. None were permitted to remain with him but his son, and two Peripatetic philosophers, with whom he used frequently to converse. When all, in whose safety he felt interested, had escaped, he seemed perfectly at ease; and, dismissing all attention to public affairs, employed his whole time in reading books of philosophy, or in disputing with his attendants on various philosophical questions. It is particularly stated by his biographer, that he read several times over, a tract written by Plato on "the immortality of the soul." The tenor of his conversation, and the studied composure of his countenance, convinced all who surrounded him that a resolution had been formed to destroy himself. With the hope of frustrating his design, they removed his sword from his pillow, whilst he slept; and, when on awaking from his slumbers, he commanded it to be instantly replaced, his son rushed into the apartment, and with the most earnest entreaties, endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose. He reminded him of the lenity of Cæsar, of the distinction with which that general had formerly treated him, of the hopes which his country yet placed on him, as its last refuge, and concluded with beseeching him to spare himself for the good of others, if not for his own sake. But neither arguments nor supplications, neither words nor tears could move his inflexible mind. He replied to every argument which had been urged at considerable length; he reasoned copiously on the principles and maxims of stoicism, which would justify the act he meditated; and assured his weeping friends, that their utmost vigilance would not prevent him from executing his design, whenever it became necessary. With



a tone of authority, which none dared to resist, he then demanded his sword, and replacing it behind his pillow, affected with the utmost composure to resign himself to sleep. About midnight he dispatched a confidential messenger to the port to ascertain whether all the Roman senators had embarked with the whole of their effects; and on receiving information that they had sailed, he threw himself again on his couch, and commanded all his attendants to retire. A few minutes after, a groan was heard, proceeding from his inner chamber; where, he was found by his family stretched on the ground, and weltering in his blood. He had inflicted on himself a severe, but not a mortal wound. Cleanthus, his physician, was proceeding to replace his bowels which had fallen out, and close the wound, when the wretched suicide, consistent to the last, made a dying effort to thrust him from him, and having plucked out his intestines with his own hands, instantly expired.

The character of this celebrated Roman has been differently estimated both by heathen and christian historians. Some have represented him as adorned with every virtue, and deserving of universal approbation; whilst others have described him as a hateful and even contemptible character. He has been accused of the private indulgence of those vices, which he was accustomed to censure in others with the utmost severity. In an advanced period of his life, he is said to have formed a habit of intemperance, and frequently to have violated the laws of chastity. In his family he was arbitrary, morose, and inexorable; his resentments were peculiarly strong; and his conduct was frequently cruel and unjust. Even in public life, his boasted patriotism seems to have been deservedly suspected; nor is it improbable, that he was frequently prompted more by a contentious spirit and personal disgusts, than by a sincere love to his country. He avowed, it is true, on all occasions a determined hostility to despotism by whomsoever it might be attempted, and to every species of public corruption in whatever quarter it might arise; but he has been charged with acting much more under the influence of a revengeful disposition, than from purely patriotic motives. It is

at least certain, that his enmity to Cæsar originated in a private injury, received at an early period of his life from that general, which was never forgotten, and admitted of no expiation.

Scarcely had Cato closed his eyes in death, when Cæsar arrived at Utica, and entered the city without opposition. The son of Porcius Cato, with several other Romans of distinction, threw themselves upon the clemency of the conqueror, and were received with great kindness. When the circumstances of Cato's death were related to Cæsar, he is said to have exclaimed, "O Cato; how I envy thee thy glorious death, by which thou hast robbed me of the glory of sparing thy life!" This event, which took place two years after the death of Pompey, terminated the war in Africa, and afforded the victor an opportunity of enjoying a temporary repose, and entering the Roman capital in triumph.

Plut. in vit. Caton. Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. Valer. Maxim. Dio. Appian. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The Roman Senator, an outline of whose history has been attempted in the preceding pages, has occupied so much attention, and obtained such unqualified approbation, from the age in which he flourished down to the present time, that it becomes an obvious duty to investigate his claims, by submitting them to the test of christian principles. For the question is not at present whether his contemporaries were justified in their applauses, or whether his heathen descendants formed a correct estimate; but whether Christians, upon whom the true light has shined, and who are furnished with the unerring standard of Revelation, ought to eulogize this self-murderer, and invest his character with the fascinating decorations of poetry and eloquence. Is it consonant to truth and justice, that such a guilty, and, on many accounts, hateful character, should be exhibited to the



young as an object deserving of their admiration on account of his exemplary virtues, and heroic death? Is it not enough that those who were associated with him in the schools of the stoics, should celebrate in glowing terms the purity of his life and the triumphs of his death; but must those also who profess to have studied in the school of Christianity describe him as “a great and worthy man—a friend to truth, virtue, and liberty; steadfastly adhering to what was right, without regard to time or circumstances; always acting with the best intentions, and aiming at the noblest objects and ends?” If indeed a life spent in the habitual indulgence of proud and malevolent feelings; or a death characterized by impatience, cowardice, and impotent rebellion against the Sovereign of the Universe, can be denominated virtuous and praiseworthy—then may the life and death of Cato of Utica be considered such. For the most cursory observer of the public and private life of this boasted patriot and hero, will easily discover that these were the predominant passions in his breast.

But, if all the transactions of his life were to be considered virtuous, in the heathen acceptance of that term—if he were throughout a steady and consistent patriot, who aimed alone at the vindication of the rights and protection of the liberties of his fellow-citizens—if there were no reason to suppose that his hostility to Cæsar, arose from a settled purpose of revenge, from which he never swerved, till his mortal career was finished—yet his last action betrayed a heart in which every malignant feeling towards man, and every impious sentiment towards God, reigned uncontrouled. How inexcusable was that pride which could not endure the thought of owing life to the clemency of an enemy! How criminal that impatience of mind, which refused to wait the issue of calamity, but urged its possessor rashly to plunge unsummoned into an eternal world! How despicable is the cowardice of the self-murderer, who shrinks from the assault of adversity, and hides himself in the covert of the grave! But, above all, how dreadful the impiety of the presumptuous mortal, who rushes upon the thick bosses of the Almighty’s buckler, and defies Omnipotence

itself! Infatuated mortals! are the common ills of life, which ‘flesh is heir to,’ so appalling, that you dare not encounter them; and is it nothing to meet the God of Vengeance, arrayed in terrible majesty? is it nothing to stand before his dread tribunal in fearful expectation of your righteous and eternal doom? Have ye nothing to fear *after* the fatal leap is taken, and when the Judge shall descend in flaming fire, to execute vengeance on his enemies? To the unhappy character, whose melancholy end has been related, these awful realities were little known, since he seems to have possessed no better guide than “Plato, on the immortality of the soul;” his criminality was therefore far less than that of the bold transgressor, who plunges into the unfathomable gulph, though admonished that death will be succeeded by *the judgment of the Great Day!*

But how delightful a contrast to the last moments of this haughty Stoic, does the peaceful departure of the sincere Christian exhibit! He calmly expects, in an humble dependence upon the mercy of God and the merits of the Redeemer, the hour of his dismissal. If previously to the arrival of that eventful hour, he meets with calamities and distresses, no murmur escapes his lips, but he meekly resigns himself to the dispensations of Divine Providence, saying, “The cup which my Father has given me to drink, shall I not drink it?” Far from exhibiting an impatient or rebellious spirit, the language of his heart accords with that of an ancient saint in old time, who was as remarkable for his patience as for the extremity of his sufferings, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.” Instead of fleeing in the “dark and cloudy day” to human and consequently fallible guides, he clasps that sacred volume, “which has brought life and immortality to light,” and exclaims with a holy triumph,

“This is the pillar of my hope  
That bears my fainting spirit up.”

Cheered and conducted by this celestial light, he walks with a firm step, and an undaunted mind, through the



valley of the shadow of death ; fearless of evil, he boldly presses forward to grasp the prize of his high calling, the promised crown of life. His hope, full of immortality, now proves the anchor of his soul, sure and steadfast ; his faith in the Redeemer triumphs most completely, now that his heart and flesh fail ; and, even amidst the pangs of dissolution, his countenance beams with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Let then Philosophy bring forward her boasted heroes and martyrs—let her point to a Cato, a Brutus, or a Lucretia ; we envy not their glory—“the least in the kingdom of heaven are far greater than they.”

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## ESSAY XIII.

*On the Administration and Death of JULIUS CÆSAR.*

FROM A. C. 45—43.

THE return of Cæsar to Italy, after the total defeat of his enemies, was celebrated at Rome by a public thanksgiving which continued forty days. Unprecedented honours were decreed him by the Senate and the people, who now seemed to vie with each other in their adulation of the conqueror. He was appointed Dictator for ten years, and the absolute authority connected with that office, was rendered yet more formidable, by being associated with that of Censor, or as it was then called, *Inspector of public morals*, which gave him the supreme disposal of all the dignities in the commonwealth. Statues were set up in different parts of the city in commemoration of his victories. One of these erected in the temple of Jupiter, represented the Dictator as standing upon a globe, to signify that the whole world had been conquered by him, and bore this flattering inscription, “To Julius Cæsar, the Demi-God.” The public attention was now occupied for a considerable time with processions and amusements, occasioned by the four suc-

cessive triumphs, which had been decreed to Cæsar. One of these was on account of his victories in Gaul and Britain—the second in honour of his successes in Egypt—the third for the defeat of Pharnaces—and the fourth for his reconquest of Numidia. During the celebration of these triumphs, large donatives were given to the populace and legionary soldiers, besides sixty thousand talents of gold which were lodged in the public treasury. By these acts of munificence, and still more by the insinuating and condescending language, in which he addressed his fellow-citizens on all public occasions, he gained so entire an ascendancy over them, that his power became absolute; every office was filled up by his sole authority; and all the decrees of the Senate were mere echoes of his sovereign pleasure.

His progress towards royalty, which was unquestionably the object of his ambition, was impeded for a time by a revival of the civil war in Spain. Pompey's sons, Cnæus and Sextus, in conjunction with several other distinguished Romans, had succeeded in raising a numerous army in that province, and had already defeated some of Cæsar's lieutenants. This unexpected insurrection of a party, which the Dictator believed to have been completely crushed, began to assume so formidable an appearance, that he conceived his presence to be necessary; and on account of the revolt of the Roman legions stationed there, large reinforcements from Italy were requisite. Pompey had been well known and much beloved in Spain, many of the veteran troops quartered in that province had served under him in their youth, and were still warmly attached to his memory. No sooner therefore did the sons of Pompey erect their standard in Spain, than many Roman and provincial corps rallied round it, and formed a phalanx of warriors, which Cæsar's generals in vain attempted to oppose. But when the Dictator himself arrived at the head of those legions, which had so lately shared in his triumphs and honours, the partisans of Pompey were checked in their hitherto successful career; the fortresses they had taken were quickly wrested from them; and, ultimately, their whole army was annihilated in a general battle



which took place at Munda. For this victory, Cæsar was chiefly indebted to his personal valour; for when, in an early part of the engagement, his ranks were broken, and some of his troops put to flight, he alighted from his horse, furnished himself with the armour of a legionary soldier, and fought as a private in the ranks, with such incredible bravery, that his routed legions were induced by his example to return to the charge with fresh vigour, and complete success. All the principal partisans of Pompey either fell in this battle, or were killed in subsequent skirmishes, amongst whom was Cn. Pompey himself.

The termination of this war removed every obstacle to the ambition of Cæsar, and gave him the undisputed sovereignty of Rome. He was now less cautious in his proceedings, and more openly assumed the state, as well as exercised the authority of a monarch. He received the addresses and congratulations of the Senate, seated in his chair of state, and surrounded by a numerous guard of soldiers and officers. Whilst he affected to decline the titles, he now required the homage, and exercised the functions of royalty. Relinquishing by degrees even the forms of popular election, he distributed amongst his dependants, the offices of Quæstor, Prætor, Ædile, Tribune, and even the Consulship itself; augmenting the number of those who held them, and lengthening or abridging the duration of their authority at his pleasure.

But such was the influence he had acquired, and so altered was the national character of the Romans, that these arbitrary proceedings scarcely excited any alarm. On the contrary, the Senate, whose authority he had subverted, continued to lavish upon him all the honours and distinctions that flattery could devise; and the common people were too much delighted with his shows of gladiators, civic feasts, and public gratuities, to entertain a jealousy of the person who contributed so largely to their pleasures. These were not, however, the principal causes of his increasing popularity. The clemency shewn to his political opponents; the respect paid to the memory of his vanquished rival; the public works undertaken by him; the patronage afforded to the arts and

to literary men; and above all, the foreign enterprises he meditated—all concurred to strengthen his administration, and render him more than ever the idol of the people. The avarice and ambition of the Romans were gratified by the prospects of national aggrandizement, and the visions of extended empire, he set before them; for he openly avowed his intention of avenging the death of Crassus on the Parthians, after which he proposed to extend his conquests to the Caspian sea, and return through Sythia, Germany, and Gaul, to the Roman capital. Nor was he unmindful of domestic improvements; for he commenced the erection of two most superb edifices, which were finished by Augustus, a temple of Venus of exquisite construction, and a spacious theatre for the celebration of public games. He also proposed to drain the Pontine marshes; to render the Tiber navigable for large vessels; to rebuild Corinth and Carthage; to open a communication between the Adriatic and Ægean seas, by cutting a navigable canal through the isthmus of Corinth; and to execute an almost endless variety of other magnificent and useful works. Amongst the multitude of his projects, he was not regardless of the interests of literature; for he not only employed the most learned men of his age in collecting a public library of great extent, but he himself contributed much to the advancement of science, by his personal labours and studies. It had been happy for himself and for his country, if he had been satisfied with pursuing these schemes of domestic improvement, or of literary ambition. But all he had attained seemed of no value, so long as there was one point of elevation to which he had not risen. He well knew the rooted prejudices of the Roman people against the very name of a king; prejudices which had been transmitted from age to age with undiminished and even augmented violence; and this very circumstance seems to have fired his ambition. He could not rest, till, in defiance of these prejudices, and in addition to all the essence of royalty which was already possessed, he was saluted by the people with the appellation of King. Several attempts were made, by his orders, as is generally supposed, but unquestionably by the agency of his de-



pendants, to obtain from the people, a recognition of this coveted title. On one occasion, a royal diadem was placed upon the head of one of his statues; a few individuals shouted, "King Cæsar;" but their voices were instantly drowned amidst the general expressions of disapprobation, uttered by the assembly. On another yet more public occasion, Antony presented him three times with a regal crown, which he as frequently, though faintly, rejected; and was greeted with the warmest acclamations of the people for that refusal. The ministers of religion were next employed to act their part, by inventing prophecies, oracles, and omens, all of which concurred to recommend the election of a king. But so inveterate was the enmity of the whole population of Rome to this measure, that neither political intrigues, nor all the arts of superstition, could procure its adoption.

In the mean time there were some Romans, who held important offices in the state, and had long enjoyed the friendship of the Dictator, that became impatient under his yoke, and formed a secret conspiracy against his life. The leaders of this conspiracy were M. Junius Brutus, and Caius Cassius, with whom were associated Trebonius, D. Brutus, Casca, Cimber, and nearly sixty others of patrician rank. Cassius was remarkable from his childhood for the vehemence of his temper, and the undaunted firmness of his conduct. He had distinguished himself in the Parthian expedition, the command of which devolved on him after the death of Crassus; and, subsequently, in the civil war, by his steadfast adherence to the interests of Pompey so long as that general lived. But, after the disastrous battle of Pharsalia, Cassius, in common with many other distinguished senators, submitted to the conqueror, and was received with great kindness. At the moment in which the conspiracy was formed against the life of Cæsar, Cassius stood so high in the confidence of the Dictator, that the prætorship of Rome was committed to him, in connection with M. Brutus, for whom Cæsar had long entertained the warmest affection. It was with some reluctance that Brutus entered into the plot; not that he was less desirous than

others of re-establishing the commonwealth, and restoring liberty to Rome; but on account of the sentiments of private friendship, and the ties of gratitude, by which he was bound to the usurper. He was the nephew of Cato, and, like him, had embraced the principles of stoicism. The antiquity of his family, (for he is said to have been a descendant of the celebrated Junius Brutus,) the firmness of his character, and his avowed hatred to tyranny, concurred to raise him in public estimation, and excite in the breasts of many an expectation, that he would imitate the conduct of his illustrious ancestor. The statues of that ancient patriot were frequently decorated with anonymous inscriptions, intended to rouse his supposed descendant from inactivity. Cassius at length succeeded in drawing him into the confederacy, and from that time the number of the conspirators daily increased. Their resolution was fixed, and nothing now prevented its execution, but the want of a favourable opportunity. Cæsar was so constantly surrounded by his guards, that it was not easy to obtain access to his person, or make an attempt upon his life, without exposing themselves to certain death.—It was, however, finally resolved that the place of assault should be the senate-house; and the day, that on which the Senate were summoned to deliberate on the Parthian expedition, and when it was confidently expected that Cæsar would be invested with regal honours. The interval of suspense which preceded the fatal day, was full of terror and alarm. The secret had been confided to so many, and the vigilance of Cæsar's friends was so unremitting, that the conspirators were in continual fear of detection. Brutus, in whose breast the struggle was greatest on account of his personal friendship to the Dictator, appeared agitated and restless in his family, though in society he maintained his usual composure. He could not conceal the solicitude of his mind from his beloved Portia, the daughter of Cato, who, with great difficulty, extorted from him the important secret—not to betray, but by her more than masculine courage to stimulate and strengthen the resolution of the conspirators.

The Ides of March, so long and anxiously expected,



at length arrived. The Senators assembled on the appointed day, and amongst the rest, the confederate patricians, each concealing a dagger beneath his robe, took their seats in Pompey's theatre, as near as possible to the Dictator's chair. They considered it a favourable omen, that, on that day, it was placed in front of Pompey's statue, which seemed, to their heated imaginations, to look down with approbation on their proceedings. A variety of unimportant circumstances, which have been minutely related by ancient historians, conspired to threaten the discovery, or delay the execution of the plot. A rumour having been spread, that Cæsar had changed his purpose of meeting the Senate on that day, Decimus Brutus was sent to the Dictator's house, who persuaded him to adhere to his original design. Trebonius undertook to engage the attention of Antony, during the fatal transaction. Cimber was fixed upon to approach the Dictator with a petition on behalf of his brother, in pressing which upon his notice with apparent earnestness, he laid hold of Cæsar's robe. This was the signal for attack. Casca, who stood near, inflicted the first wound, which was instantly succeeded by many others from different hands. At first Cæsar placed himself in the attitude of defence; but when, on looking round, he saw innumerable swords drawn against him, and, amongst the rest, that of his friend Brutus, he attempted no resistance, but wrapping himself in his robe, sunk to the earth, and expired almost without a struggle. Brutus immediately addressed the Senate in a short but impressive oration, in which he attempted to vindicate his own conduct and that of his accomplices, by bringing forward the proofs of Cæsar's having aspired to the crown. He was heard in profound silence; none of all the flatterers of Cæsar durst at that moment attempt to reply. Consternation and terror soon seized and scattered the assembly; the senators fled in different directions, and the whole city was quickly in a tumult. The favourites of the Dictator, ignorant of the intentions of the conspirators, and fearing a similar fate, concealed themselves for a time; nor did they venture to appear in public, till they had received an assurance

from Brutus and Cassius that no violence should be offered them; a promise which was inviolably observed, though it cost them dear, as the sequel of their history will prove.

Plut. in Cæs. Sueton. in id. Dio. Cass. lib. 43. Cicer. Epist. Vell. Paterc. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

There were many interesting and amiable traits in the character of Julius Cæsar. He was placable, merciful, forgiving, and affectionate. Unlike the sanguinary despots, who preceded him in the government, he aspired to rule by kindness, rather than by terror. He wished to be the sovereign, not the tyrant of Rome. He cherished no feelings of resentment towards his vanquished enemies, but as soon as his pride was gratified by their submission, he cordially forgave, and even received them into his friendship. Not only could he weep over a fallen rival, who preferred death to captivity, as in the instances of Pompey and Cato; but could entertain the sincerest affection for those who had been most hostile to his person and government, as in the case of Brutus, who, after having zealously espoused the cause of his rival, was admitted into his confidence, and numbered amongst his most intimate friends. Let Christians go and do likewise; let them learn from this heathen prince not merely to forgive, but also to love their enemies. Let them suppress those feelings of resentment and malevolence, which are so congenial to the pride of the heart, but so contrary to the spirit of the Gospel; and imitate the example, not of Cæsar merely, but of an infinitely more exalted personage, who has taught us to “overcome evil with good,” and by acts of kindness and compassion to soften the hearts of our enemies.

Yet, amongst all the amiable qualities of Cæsar, there was one hateful passion, that possessed an uncontrouled influence, and threw a dark shade over his whole cha-



racter. The lust of power—that sin by which the angels fell—tarnished all his virtues, blunted his feelings, and continually urged him on to deeds of blood, from which his susceptible mind would otherwise have recoiled with abhorrence. Ambition, like a worm at the root of a delicate plant, withered all his hopes, and blighted all his enjoyments. His expectations were suddenly cut off, and his life abruptly terminated, by the baneful influence of this passion, which, like a deadly poison, rankled at the heart, and spread its venom through the whole moral system. Thus is it often seen that characters, otherwise amiable and lovely, have one sin that easily besets them, one vicious habit by which they are enslaved, or one immoral propensity which is habitually indulged; characters, to whom the words of our Saviour, addressed to an interesting and amiable youth, may with justice be applied, “One thing thou lackest.” Pride, avarice, sensuality, or some other deadly sin, reigns without controul, bringing forth fruit to eternal death! For it is as certain that one unsubdued sin will finally destroy the soul, as that “without holiness no man can see the Lord.”

We have seen the abrupt termination of that career of ambition, on which Cæsar entered in early life, and which he steadily pursued, till his purposes were broken off by death. What remained to him of all his conquests, after he had fallen by the daggers of his assassins? Did not as small an urn contain his ashes, as that in which were deposited the ashes of his meanest vassal? How narrow a cell is sufficient to hold the relics of the mortal, whom the whole world could not satisfy, and whose ambition grasped at universal dominion! He that could not brook a rival, or submit to share with another individual the sovereignty of a vast empire, has no sooner triumphed over his foes, and soared to the height of his ambition, than he is suddenly hurled from the pinnacle of his glory, his plumes are trodden in the dust, and the invincible conqueror is himself conquered by an irresistible foe. How impressive the instruction conveyed by this event to every description of worldly-minded characters! How distinctly does it warn them

of the vanity of their pursuits, the uncertainty of their enjoyments, and the transient duration of their glory and power! "Let not, then, the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the rich man in his wealth, nor the strong man in his strength; but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The striking resemblance that may be traced between the circumstances of Pompey's and of Cæsar's death, seems to indicate the hand of retributive justice. Both fell by treachery; both by the hand of assassins; both by supposed friends, and former favourites. The tribute of sympathy rendered by Cæsar to his fallen rival, he now needed himself from surviving friends. The ingratitude which stung to the quick his illustrious competitor, Cæsar was himself destined to feel most acutely in his last moments; for no pang was so sensibly felt by him as that which the dagger of his beloved Brutus occasioned. Thus does the righteous Judge, in many instances, recompense, even on this side the grave, the violence, the injustice, and the impiety of sinners, by constraining them to eat of the fruit of their doings. "They that take the sword perish by the sword;" traitors are themselves betrayed; and those who have contributed to the assassination of others, frequently end their days by perfidy and treason.

Whatever might be the motives which prompted the conspirators to this deed of violence, however sincerely they might desire to rid their country of an usurper, who had trampled under foot the liberties of his country; no excuse can be made for the base and inhuman manner in which the crime was perpetrated, by which the agents in this nefarious transaction were degraded from the rank of upright and conscientious patriots, to the level of desperados and assassins. Excellency of motive, and purity of intention, cannot justify an immoral action, or transform that which is in its own nature evil, into a virtuous and commendable deed. It is desirable not only to have an honest, but also an enlightened conscience; capable of discerning good from evil, and of defining, according to truth, the boundaries of virtue and vice. There have been some who supposed that they



rendered an acceptable service to the Most High, when they persecuted, even to death, those whose religious opinions or practices differed from their own; but it will one day appear, that these conscientious persecutors were, in the sight of God, murderers, whose "feet were swift to shed blood," and who, without repentance, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." It is a light thing to be judged of man's judgment. Deceived by ignorance, warped by prejudice, or perverted by a depraved heart, man may censure those whom God approves, or applaud those who have "done evil in the sight of the Lord." But the hour approaches, in which all will be judged according to their real characters, and the nature of their works—when Cæsar and Brutus, princes and subjects, oppressors and slaves, tyrants and patriots—all will meet before the dread tribunal, and await his impartial decision, who judges, not according to appearances or professions, but "who judgeth righteous judgment."

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## ESSAY XIV.

*On the literary and public Character of CICERO, the  
Roman Orator.*

BORN A. C. 107. DIED A. C. 43.

FEW of those names, which have been preserved amidst the wreck of former ages, are so extensively known and admired as that of the philosophical statesman and eloquent writer, to whose memory the present essay is devoted. The period in which he lived was so eventful; the part he took in the transactions of that period, so considerable; and the records which have been preserved of his public and private life, both from his own pen, and the writings of his contemporaries, are so abundant and interesting; that it is not difficult to account for the

celebrity of his name, and the reputation which he has maintained in all ages and countries. Brief as the outline must necessarily be, a sketch of the public character and literary occupations of this distinguished Roman forms an essential part of the history of that age.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO was descended from an ancient but not opulent family. It does not appear that his ancestors distinguished themselves in any of the walks of public life. He was a native of Arpinum, an obscure village, which had previously given birth to Caius Marius; and was born in the same year in which Pompey commenced his career of ambition at Rome. No pains were spared in his education; and his early progress in every department of literature was such as to excite high expectations concerning him. He was instructed in the elements of language, and in the sciences, by most distinguished masters; he studied poetry under Archias; rhetoric, under Plotius; philosophy, under Phædrius the Epicurean, Philo the Academic, and Diodotus the Stoic; and jurisprudence, under the two Sævolas, both of whom were celebrated for their profound knowledge of Roman Law. After having completed his course of education, he served for a short time in Sylla's army; but preferring civil to military pursuits, soon returned to Rome, and began to distinguish himself as an orator. His first efforts were successful, and afforded a pleasing presage of his future eminence; but as they were exerted on behalf of the oppressed, they exposed him to the displeasure of Sylla, whose "tender mercies were cruel."

Prompted in part by an ardent desire of knowledge, and partly by a wish to recruit his health which had been greatly impaired with study, but chiefly by fear of Sylla, Cicero travelled into Greece, and fixed his residence at Athens. Here he diligently attended the lectures of Antiochus, an academic philosopher of great celebrity, and the rhetorical exercises of Demetrius the Syrian, a distinguished master in the art of speaking. It is supposed, that during this visit to Athens, he was initiated into the celebrated Eleusinian mysteries, to which he alludes in many of his writings, in terms both of com-



mendation and reverence. From one passage, in which he speaks of these mysteries, it seems probable that they inculcated the doctrines of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. It is evident that they tended greatly to shake his faith in the popular superstitions of the age and country in which he lived. After having gained all the information, and improved all the advantages which Athens afforded, he proceeded to take the tour of Asia, and in every place sought out the men of learning who resided in the cities through which he passed. At Stratonica, he formed an intimacy with Menippus; at Adramyttus, with Xenocles; at Magnesia, with Dionysius; and at Rhodes, with Molon; all of whom were greatly admired for their eloquence and learning. The greatest benefits resulted to the Roman Orator from the society of these Grecian and Asiatic scholars; and they in return were surprised and delighted with the specimens of eloquence with which he indulged them.

On his return to Rome, after the death of Sylla, his improvement in elocution was manifest to all that heard him. His faults had been corrected, his voice and gesture regulated, and his style purified and enriched, by an attentive study of the best models. His reputation as an orator, and his popularity as a statesman, daily increased. The most important causes were entrusted to him, which he never failed to plead with the most impressive effect, though not always with success. He obtained without difficulty his election to the Quæstorship, as soon as he was capable by law of offering himself a candidate for that office; and the province assigned to him in which to exercise its functions, was Sicily, which was deemed the most honourable and important of all the Roman Quæstorships. Soon after his return from Sicily he was appointed Prætor, and ultimately, through the influence of Pompey, was elected to the Consulship.

The year in which this office devolved upon Cicero, was one which became memorable in the annals of Rome, on account of the dangers to which the republic was exposed, and the skill with which the Consul navi-

gated the vessel of state through a stormy sea. The conspiracy of Cataline and his profligate associates has been alluded to in a former essay,\* as having been detected by the vigilance, and rendered harmless by the energy of Cicero; who obtained secret information of all the meetings of the conspirators, apprehended the leaders of the faction at the moment in which their plans were ripe for execution; and, from a conviction that it was essential to the safety of the commonwealth, exerted all his eloquence to obtain a decree of the Senate for their immediate condemnation. But as many of the ring-leaders of this conspiracy belonged to the first families in Rome, and especially as they were defended by Julius Cæsar, who then possessed great influence in the Senate, it was with great difficulty that a vote of that legislative body was obtained for the execution of these criminals. To this severe, but necessary result, the firmness of Cato contributed no less than the eloquence of the Consul. In consequence of this decree, Lentulus, Cethegus, and several others, who were known to be principal conspirators, were put to death; and Cataline himself, who had collected an army in Etruria, was slain in battle. The republic having been thus restored to tranquillity by the decided measures which Cicero had adopted, public thanks were given to him as to the "Father of his country," and sacrifices offered to the gods for the deliverance which had been granted. The adulation paid to Cicero on this occasion was but too grateful to a mind peculiarly susceptible of flattery. His vanity was so inflamed by it, that he could not henceforward refrain from complimenting himself on all occasions, both in public and private, in terms as extravagant as any which his most servile flatterers could adopt.

The part which Cicero had acted in the suppression of Cataline's conspiracy made Cæsar his enemy. That ambitious statesman clearly perceived that the same incorruptible patriotism which had shone so conspicuously in that transaction, would be likely to obstruct his

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\* See Rom. Hist. Book II. Essay 12.



projected elevation. It was therefore resolved at all events to banish Cicero from the city ; and the most unworthy means were resorted to, in order to effect this purpose. Clodius, a turbulent tribune, whose youth had been spent in profligacy, and yet who had acquired considerable influence in the Senate by his talents and wealth, was the agent employed in this degrading service. That enterprising demagogue, influenced partly by a desire of revenge, and partly by Cæsar's known wishes, proposed, and finally carried a law, which indirectly charged the late Consul with having illegally put to death several Roman citizens. Deserted both by Pompey and Crassus, from whom he seems to have expected protection, Cicero was advised by his friends to retire from the storm. He went into voluntary exile, and after his departure from Rome, his inveterate adversary, the infamous Clodius, prevailed upon the Senate to confiscate his effects, reduce his splendid mansion to ashes, and declare him a public enemy. The study of philosophy had not sufficiently fortified the mind of Cicero, to enable him to bear with composure these indignities. His letters to his most intimate friends during the period of his exile, sufficiently prove the perturbed state of his mind. Incessantly does he pour out the bitterest lamentations ; sometimes accusing his friends of inactivity and indifference to his interests, in not having obtained his recall ; and sometimes uttering invectives against his ungrateful enemies, for their persecution of the best of Roman citizens, amongst whom he seems to have classed himself.

After Cicero had languished nearly sixteen months in exile, Pompey felt the importance of securing his friendship, and exerted himself indirectly to obtain a decree of the Senate for his restoration. This was effected without much difficulty, now that Cæsar was absent in Gaul, and Clodius had fallen into disgrace by his violent proceedings. A proclamation of the most flattering kind was issued, authorizing and even entreating his immediate return, and promising the restitution of all his effects. All the Italian cities vied with each other in expressions of joy, and extravagant panegyric ; and almost the whole

population of Rome went out of the city to present him with their sincere and affectionate congratulations. On his return from exile, he found the republic in a state of extreme agitation: the war between Pompey and Cæsar was then beginning; the principal senators had attached themselves, as interest or inclination led, to one or other of the combatants; and it became evident that the question of the sovereignty of Rome must be decided by the sword. Cicero sincerely lamented, but could not prevent the rupture. He endeavoured, but in vain, to maintain a strict neutrality, by withdrawing as much as possible from public life, and devoting himself to literary pursuits. When, however, this neutrality was no longer practicable, and it became necessary to choose between Pompey and Cæsar, he attached himself to the former, and took refuge in his camp. But after the battle of Pharsalia, he submitted, amongst many others, to the victor, by whom he was received with fraternal tenderness.

Several years were now devoted to the more tranquil occupations of literary and philosophical research, interrupted alone by those professional engagements to which he was called as a public orator. In this interval he is supposed to have written some of his most valuable works, a part of which have been preserved; but the far greater part have perished amidst the desolations of former generations. Though in a great measure retired from public life, Cicero was not insensible to the degraded state of his country; he observed, with deep regret, the absence of that patriotic feeling and ardent love of liberty, which once characterized Roman citizens; and the general corruption of principles and manners which had taken place. But from these public evils, which were most sincerely deplored, his attention was suddenly called to a domestic calamity of so distressing a nature, as almost to overwhelm his mind, and banish every other consideration. This was the death of his daughter Tullia, to whom he was most affectionately attached, and who had been the companion and delight of his old age. The condolence of friendship and the amusement of literary occupations were alike ineffectual



to relieve his burdened mind; nor could Philosophy herself, whose supporting influence he had so often extolled in his writings, administer comfort in this hour of trial. His wounded spirit refused consolation, and resigned itself to all the violence of unrestrained grief. To such an extreme of infatuation did he permit his passions to carry him, that he even conceived the project of erecting a temple to her memory, and worshipping her as a goddess!

Before this breach which had been made in his domestic comforts was repaired, the death of Cæsar took place; an event to which Cicero did not personally contribute, though he seems to have approved of the conduct of the conspirators, and was deeply involved in its consequences. During the agitations which followed that event, he retired to his villa, and employed himself in composing some of those works, which have rendered his name so illustrious in the republic of letters. It was however impossible that so public a character should be concealed, or that amidst the collision of violent and contending parties, he should escape unhurt. Antony, first the flatterer, and afterwards the cruel avenger of Julius Cæsar, formed an implacable aversion to this distinguished patriot; and made it a condition of his junction with Octavius and Lepidus, that his name should be inserted amongst the list of the proscribed. Emissaries were immediately dispatched, to discover the place of Cicero's concealment, and put him to death. The proscribed orator was overtaken near the sea-coast, travelling in his litter, and attempting to effect his escape from Italy. His few attendants made a feeble resistance to the assassins, but were soon overpowered; the work of revenge was faithfully executed; and the head and hands of the murdered senator were sent to Rome, as a present to his malignant adversary. Antony having contemplated them with much joy, commanded them to be publicly exhibited in the forum, the theatre of Cicero's former glory, and the scene of his most splendid triumphs.

Thus expired, in the sixty-third year of his age, the prince of Roman Orators; and at whose death, it may be affirmed with truth, that the brightest intellectual

luminary was extinguished, which had ever shone upon the republic. His works were numerous, and related to a great variety of subjects. Many of these exquisite productions have perished; but enough remain to establish his reputation on an imperishable basis, and elevate their author to the highest pinnacle of literary fame.

Plut. in vit. Cicer. Ciceron. Oper. Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. Appian. Dio. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

“The world by wisdom knew not God.” This apostolical testimony receives abundant confirmation from *profane* as well as *sacred* history. For how little did the most illustrious characters of antiquity know of the “only living and true God.” If exalted genius and extensive learning—if comprehension of mind, and refinement of taste—could lead to a right knowledge of God, assuredly the scholar and statesman, whose life has been sketched in the preceding pages, had not lived and died in ignorance on this momentous subject. Yet though richly endowed by nature, and highly cultivated by education, his writings abundantly demonstrate that he was far from having attained to the knowledge of the truth. He professed indeed to investigate into the nature and attributes of Deity, but whilst discoursing on these awful and sublime topics, in what idle conjectures and unprofitable speculations did he indulge! How unlike his portrait of the Supreme God, to that pure and spiritual and righteous Being, whom the Scriptures exhibit! If, as some suppose, he had really imbibed the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and was convinced of the absurdity of Polytheism, how criminal was that fear or indifference, which prevented him from openly avowing that conviction! Nor does he appear to have been better informed on the interesting subject of a future state of being; to which he alludes indeed in some parts of his writing,



but speaks of it rather as a pleasing dream, or a subject of curious speculation, than as an object of faith, or a joyful reality. And though in many respects his ethical disquisitions are deserving of high commendation, yet how remote was the proud morality he inculcated, from the humble, the self-denying, the benevolent morality of the Gospel!

The acquirements of Cicero, pre-eminent as they were, were vigorously and usefully employed. His talent was not hidden in a napkin, nor was his light placed under a bushel. He exerted all his mental energies in pleading the cause of the oppressed, in maintaining judgment and justice, or in exposing the vices of the age and country in which he lived. The two-edged sword of his eloquence was continually drawn, either to defend the liberties of the republic, or to scatter the enemies of peace and virtue. So should it be the concern of all whom God has blest with rank or influence, wealth or wisdom, to occupy those several talents, till the Master come, by employing them diligently in works of benevolence and usefulness. As the wisdom of the Omnipotent Creator is manifest in the construction of the human frame, in adapting all its several members to the offices for which they are designed, and in endowing them with different properties according to the stations which they are intended to occupy, so in the social body does the same infinite intelligence appear in arming some with courage, and endowing others with wisdom; in giving to one the tongue of the learned, and to another the treasures of the affluent; and in distributing to every one in his own order and proportion that which is necessary to the good of the whole; so that "the whole body may be fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Is it not then incumbent upon each member of this social system vigorously to exert those faculties with which it has been entrusted, not for its own benefit merely, but for the advantage of all? But if the unprofitable servant, who hides his lord's talent in the earth, has reason to apprehend a fearful doom, what must be the future condemnation of the unfaithful steward, who wastes it by profligacy and excess, and prostitutes

to the worst of purposes his natural or acquired endowments?

It was both natural and lawful, that Cicero should feel much secret satisfaction in having been the instrument of good to his beloved country, by preserving it from anarchy and carnage; but when that satisfaction of mind grew into self-love, self-admiration, and self-applause, it rendered him exceedingly contemptible. Succeeding generations are thus furnished with an humiliating example of the weakness, as well as wickedness, that is sometimes connected with superior mental endowments. It becomes us amidst all our efforts to do good, to guard against a vain and selfish temper, and to practise virtue rather for its own sake than for the honour it may yield, or even the pleasure it can impart. To aim at usefulness, is a primary duty—to derive pleasure from the consciousness of having been useful, is not unlawful—but farther than this, we may not proceed—all beyond is sin.

Affliction is the common lot of man. Neither rank nor talents can purchase an exemption from its pressure. The most powerful cannot resist—the most wealthy cannot bribe—the most eloquent cannot disarm it. When the Roman orator was assailed by it, he was found weak as other men. He fainted in the day of adversity, and thus proved that his strength was small. Though he could number all the principal senators amongst his sympathizing friends—though he had written volumes in praise of philosophy, in which he had represented it as the balm of human life, and the unfailing refuge of the distressed—yet how forlorn and desolate was his condition, when deprived of his beloved Tullia, and when banished from his native land. So desolate and forlorn must ever be the condition of those who “have no hope, and are without God in the world.” There are seasons and circumstances of human life, in which nothing can bind up the broken heart, or sooth the agonizing spirit, but the strong consolations and immortal hopes of the everlasting Gospel.



## ESSAY XV.

*On the Literature of the Romans, during the Commonwealth.*

MANY years elapsed after the rebuilding of the city before even the faintest dawn of science can be discerned amongst the citizens of Rome. Continually occupied either with domestic contentions or foreign enterprises, they had neither leisure nor inclination to engage in those calm pursuits and that diligent research upon which the acquisition of knowledge depends. Instead of labouring to excite an ardent desire of literary distinction in the Roman youth, the leaders of the republic discouraged every attempt to introduce the learning of Greece and Asia into the republic. Two facts are recorded by ancient historians which prove, not only that as late as the Carthaginian wars, literature had made no progress among the Romans, but that strong prejudices continued to operate against it, as having a tendency to enervate the mind, and disqualify for military pursuits. It will be recollected that in the interval between the second and third Punic wars, in consequence of the conquest of Macedon, Greece became subject to the Roman yoke. Amongst other measures devised by the conquerors to accomplish the complete subjugation of the Greeks, one of the most effectual was to transport to Italy the most learned and popular individuals, connected with the several republics. In pursuance of this policy, at the dissolution of the Achæan league, a considerable number of learned Greeks, among whom was Polybius the historian, were cited to Rome; and after having been summarily condemned by the Senate, as disaffected to the commonwealth, were forbidden to return to Achaia, and stationed in different parts of Italy. These foreigners planted schools of philosophy where they resided, and educated the Roman youth in every department of Grecian literature. It quickly became fashionable to study under Grecian masters, and to attend the lectures of philosophers,

rhetoricians, or artists, from that country. The Senate observed with alarm this rage for foreign literature : they apprehended that it would transform their hardy and invincible legions into effeminate scholars, and degrade a nation of freemen into slaves. They therefore passed a decree prohibiting schools of philosophy in Rome, and banishing the preceptors from the capital. But laws are ineffectual to check the progress of knowledge. A taste for literary pursuits had already been acquired by many, and could not now be restrained by statutes and penal regulations. Forbidden to prosecute their favourite studies in their own country, they passed over into Greece, where, though liberty was no longer enjoyed, the arts and sciences still flourished. From that period a residence of several years in some one of the principal cities of Greece became almost essential to a liberal education.

Another proof of the barbarism of the Romans, at a still later period, may be gathered from the conduct of Mummius and his troops at the destruction of Corinth. The city was known to contain some of the finest models of art, executed by the most celebrated masters; but when the Romans took possession of the place, they manifested no curiosity to inspect, nor any desire to preserve its literary treasures. The most exquisite paintings were, with the utmost indifference, consigned to the flames, or distributed amongst the legionary soldiers as of little value; the most admired productions of a Praxiteles or an Apelles were suffered to perish amidst the common desolation, with the exception of a few specimens preserved by Polybius, and afterwards carried to Rome. It cannot therefore be doubted that till after the destruction of Carthage, which was contemporary with that of Corinth, the arts did not flourish, nor was literature encouraged in any province of the Roman republic.

But from that period, philosophy, poetry, oratory, and every other species of intellectual attainment, grew with the utmost rapidity. It soon appeared, that the Romans were not less invincible in the walks of science, than they had previously been on the field of battle; and that even amidst the despotism of Marius and Sylla, or the civil wars of Pompey and Cæsar, it was possible to cul-



tivate with success the pacific and liberal arts. After having dwelt so long on the tumults and seditions that agitated the commonwealth, it is grateful to withdraw our attention for a moment from these scenes of carnage, and glance at the less splendid course of its literary heroes.

The philosophical sect which was in most repute at Rome, whose principles accorded best with the national character of the Romans, and to which most of the leading men in the republic were attached, was that of the Stoics. To the doctrines of Epicurus, they had the most decided aversion, since it was a fundamental maxim of that sect, that *pleasure* alone was the supreme good. It is recorded of Fabricius, the opponent of Pyrrhus, that when the tenets of the Epicurean philosophy were first explained to him by Cyneas, he exclaimed, "The gods grant that Pyrrhus and all the enemies of Rome may ever retain these sentiments!" Scipio Africanus, the illustrious conqueror of Carthage, and his friend Lælius, were amongst the earliest advocates of stoicism. But the most memorable of the Roman stoics, was Cato of Utica, who not only contended most strenuously on all occasions for its harsh and forbidding principles, but seems more than any other, both in life and death, to have reduced those principles to practice. Marcus Brutus, the associate of Cassius in the murder of Cæsar, and his learned contemporary Terentius Varro, belonged to the sect of Ancient Academics, who differed little from the Stoics, and whose tenets led to similar conduct. It is not easy to determine, to which class of philosophers Cicero belonged. For though our information respecting the philosophy of that age is principally derived from his writings, he held the balance so equally, and states with such impartiality the distinguished tenets of each, that it can scarcely be discovered, on which side his preference lay. It may however be conjectured, from his complaint that the Peripatetic philosophy was neglected at Rome, and from the instruction given to his son when resident at Athens, to make it his study, that he preferred, upon the whole, the system of Aristotle.

It was remarked in a former essay, that POETRY was

of later growth in Rome than in almost any other civilized country. We are informed, that at an early period of the commonwealth, there were obscure individuals, who went about reciting or singing what were called *Fescennine* verses, or rude dialogues in metre, intended to celebrate the exploits of warriors, or the occupations of husbandry. These recitations grew insensibly into a kind of dramatic composition, borrowed from the Greeks, and adapted to Roman manners. The first names which are known in connection with the Roman drama, were Nævius, Ennius, and Plautus, all of whom were nearly contemporary, and flourished about 200 years before the Christian Æra. Ennius is celebrated, not only as the most ancient of Roman poets, who first invented hexameter verse, but also as an historian; for he is said to have written a life of Scipio Africanus in verse. The productions of the two former have perished, but some of the comedies of Plautus still exist, and afford a curious, but most repulsive representation of the state of society and manners at Rome in his day. Cæcilius, whose compositions, which were highly commended by Cicero, have been lost; and Terence, whose comedies are well known, succeeded in the same department, by whose writings the Roman drama was refined, but not purified. At the same time, Actius and Pacuvius, two tragedians of repute, but of whose works nothing remains, are supposed to have flourished. A higher order of poetry next arose, of which the celebrated Lucretius was the founder. That poet, who was contemporary both with Sylla and Cicero, conceived the design of adorning philosophical speculations with all the graces and charms of poetry. So far did he succeed, as to produce a poem, which still exists, and is greatly admired by many, in which abstract philosophical research is strangely blended with the utmost luxuriance of fancy, and the richest beauties of composition. But the principal objection to this curious monument of antiquity is, that it is raised upon the basis of infidelity, and sanctions the most unblushing conclusions of modern atheists. Next to the philosophical Lucretius, appeared, in the train of Roman poets, the tender, the elegant, but unhappily it must also be added, the licentious Catullus.



He was the first lyric poet amongst the Romans, and flourished in the days of Julius Cæsar. Nor must Cicero be forgotten amongst the poets of that age, who not only distinguished himself in early youth, by composing a poem which was extant in Plutarch's time, but through life continued to amuse himself at intervals of leisure from professional engagements or severer studies with the composition of poetry, in which, if he did not greatly excel, it does not appear that his productions were unworthy of his high reputation. It is not probable, however, that if time had snatched these effusions of Cicero's muse from the wreck of ages, they would have borne any proportion in value to those productions of his pen, which have been transmitted to posterity.

Amongst the earliest and most distinguished prose writers, may be mentioned *Cato* the elder, or as he is usually stiled, the Censor, whose writings were chiefly historical, and drew forth the warmest praises of Cicero, Quintilian, and Pliny—*Varro*, to the extent of whose erudition, and the value of whose works, (which are supposed to have related in part to natural philosophy,) his friend Cicero has borne an ample testimony—*Sallust*, whose narrative will not cease to be admired, so long as the faithful delineation of character, and the diligent investigation of facts, are deemed essential to history—and *Cæsar*, whose record of his own campaigns, is adorned with such purity of diction and elegance of style, that it cannot fail to gratify the taste of the reader, however adverse he may feel to the subjects of which they treat. But valuable as the writings of many of these poets, philosophers, and historians may appear to posterity, it is certain, that their authors were indebted for their reputation and influence, whilst living, to the exercise of an art, which was not necessarily connected with any of these attainments. This was the *forensic* art, in which almost every Roman of education sought to distinguish himself. Amongst so many competitors, it was not easy to obtain the prize of eloquence; but there were a considerable number, who are known to have been pre-eminent in this popular qualification. Tiberius and

Caius Gracchus, Lucius Crassus, the elder and younger Cato, Julius Cæsar, and above all, Cicero, were celebrated orators, in an age and country, in which oratory was deemed most essential to a statesman, a senator, or a general. But from the time of Cæsar's and Cicero's death, genuine manly eloquence began to decline; and servile flattery and pompous panegyric occupied its place.

Collected from the writings of Polybius, Cicero, Aulus Gellius, Aurelius Victor, &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

From the preceding sketch of the origin and progress of Roman literature, it appears, that *knowledge is power*; and that wisdom is not only better, but eventually more mighty than weapons of war. The Romans had with ease effected the conquest of Greece; but afterwards were themselves subdued by the science and erudition imported from that country. A few captives scattered through Italy, without wealth, without connections, without civil distinction, or political authority, were able, by their genius and learning alone, to give a new character to the Romans, form them to new habits, engage them in new pursuits, and constitute them (in a subordinate sense of the term) *new creatures*. A rude, ignorant, and ferocious people were, by their influence, gradually formed into a highly cultivated and refined nation. May it not then be inferred, that the results to mankind of that general diffusion of knowledge which characterizes the present day must be highly beneficial? How irresistible will be the force of this weapon when wielded, not as in former ages of darkness by a few favoured individuals, but by all classes of society, and all the nations of the earth! And if such be the influence of knowledge, how supremely important is it that that knowledge which is



communicated should be pure ; derived from the sacred source of revealed truth ; and leading to the practice of every Christian virtue !

If the impression made by the Achæan captives upon their conquerors be deemed surprising, how much more astonishing were the effects that followed the public ministry of the first teachers of Christianity. These were men of lowly origin and uncultivated minds, destitute of wealth, influence, and authority ; who proclaimed doctrines the most humiliating, enjoined duties the most arduous, and required sacrifices the most painful ; and yet, who were so richly endowed with the spirit of wisdom from on high, that they were enabled to shake the empire of darkness, dissipate the gloom of superstition, and dart the beams of heavenly truth with the velocity of lightning from the one end of the earth to the other. In the former case, the systems of philosophy taught by the Grecian captives were so gratifying to the pride of the heart, and so perfectly compatible with the indulgence of sin, that it is not difficult to account for their prompt and cordial reception ; but in the latter case, the doctrine of the cross, which formed the principal topic of the apostle's ministry, was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" its reception can therefore be ascribed to no influence but that which is emphatically styled, "*the demonstration of the Spirit.*" The Roman and Grecian philosophers availed themselves of all the persuasive influence of oratory and all the fascinating graces of elocution ; but the first preachers of the gospel came, not "with excellency of speech, or with the enticing words of man's wisdom;" but "in weakness, in fear, and with much trembling," they delivered their important message ; yet so great was their success, that they were accused by their enemies of "turning the world upside down ;" "their line went out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

It is lamentable to observe the degradation of intellect, and the perversion of the noblest powers of mind, with which those sons of science, whose names have been mentioned, were justly chargeable. They were favoured with no ordinary measure of talent, but that talent was in

some instances prostituted to the worst of purposes ; and even those, whose writings are most moral, and, in their sense of the term, religious, exhausted their capacious powers in fruitless speculations, and lost themselves amidst the mazes of scepticism and uncertainty. Who can glance at the productions of the most admired poets of that age, without a glow of indignation at the licentiousness and impurity in which they indulged ? Or who can observe the most impure of these volumes placed in the hands of youth, without the utmost alarm for the morals of those, who are thus early exposed to the contamination of vice ? Is there not enough that is harmless, (to say the least,) amongst all the stories of antiquity, that Christian parents and preceptors deem it necessary to familiarize the imaginations of their youthful charge, with the ribaldry of ancient comedians, or the unhallowed wit of epigrammatists, satirists, and amatory poets ? Is it because there is no chrystal fountain of living waters, that the young are conducted to these polluted streams ? Knowledge, assuredly, is far too dearly purchased, if it be acquired at the risk of every moral principle, and by the sacrifice of every virtuous feeling : nor is the cultivation of taste to be desired, however excellent that object may appear, if it can only be attained by an acquaintance with writers, whether ancient or modern, whose productions have a necessary tendency to vitiate the affections, inflame the passions, and destroy the soul !



# STUDIES IN HISTORY.

## *THE HISTORY OF ROME.*

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### BOOK III.

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FROM THE DEATH OF JULIUS CÆSAR TO THE REIGN OF  
CONSTANTINE.

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#### ESSAY I.

*The second TRIUMVIRATE—Death of BRUTUS and CAS-  
SIUS—ANTONY and CLEOPATRA—AUGUSTUS, first  
Emperor of Rome.*

FROM A. C. 43—28.

THE death of Julius Cæsar did not give liberty to Rome. That such was the hope and intention of the principal conspirators cannot be doubted, but in this expectation they were completely disappointed. Forming their opinion of the mass of Roman citizens by the ardent love of liberty that glowed within their own breasts, and conceiving of them as the genuine descendants of those patriots, who had formerly shaken off the yoke of tyranny, they anticipated the cordial support of the whole population of Rome. But, on the contrary, they found that Cæsar, notwithstanding his ambition, was greatly beloved by the people; and that his death, far from diminishing, had increased and strengthened their attachment. When Brutus came forward to explain to his fellow-citizens, the motives that had prompted him to join with so many other distinguished senators in this act, his address was

so coldly received by the populace, that he and his associates deemed it prudent to retire to the Capitol, and provide means of self-defence. Antony in the mean time was not inactive. He convened the senators, who had been scattered in all directions by the tumults which followed Cæsar's death; assumed a tone of great moderation; and even consented to an act of general amnesty, upon condition that all the acts of the late Dictator were confirmed, and a public funeral permitted. The design of Antony in making these proposals was not penetrated, till their fatal effects were inevitable. By the public reading of Cæsar's will, in which he had bequeathed a valuable legacy to every Roman citizen; by the exhibition of his body covered with wounds, and his robe rent by the daggers of his assassins; and, especially, by an artful oration delivered at the time of his interment; Antony inflamed the passions of the multitude, and wrought them up to the highest pitch of indignation. Breathing revenge and slaughter against the murderers of their benefactor, many of the citizens snatched flaming brands from Cæsar's funeral pile, with the intention of reducing to ashes the houses of the principal conspirators. This attempt was frustrated by the vigilance and courage of a small number of armed patriots; but so general had been the expression of popular fury, and so manifest were the hostile intentions of Antony, that a resolution was formed by Brutus and his friends, of retiring from the city, till that fury should have subsided, and public tranquillity should be restored.

The departure of Brutus and his associates from Rome left an open field to the ambition of Antony, who now, with consummate art, influenced both the Senate and people to adopt those measures which were calculated to strengthen his interest. A guard of soldiers attended him on all occasions, whose number was gradually increased, till they amounted to six thousand veterans, who having formerly served under Cæsar, now sought an opportunity of avenging his death. Sextus Pompeius, the only surviving son of Pompey, was recalled, at Antony's suggestion; and Octavius, the nephew and heir of Julius Cæsar, invited to Rome to take possession of his inheri-



stance. By these auxiliaries, neither of whom were at first considered sufficiently formidable to excite his jealousy, Antony expected to secure his own elevation to that supreme authority, from which Cæsar had so lately fallen. The extreme youth of Octavius, who was then but eighteen years of age, and his inexperience as a public character, rendered Antony so unsuspecting of danger from this quarter, that he made no opposition to his public, and almost triumphal entry into the city. But it was not long before he perceived his error, in having introduced a formidable rival, whose popularity, as the adopted son of Cæsar, was far superior to his own. The only method by which this false step could be recovered, was to consent to the division of a power, which he could no longer monopolize, by forming a triple league similar to that which had existed between Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus. A conference was therefore held between Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, (the latter of whom, though a despicable character, possessed a considerable degree of influence at Rome,) which terminated in the establishment of the *second Triumvirate*. This fatal league was cemented with the blood of the best citizens of Rome; for it was followed by a proscription, in which were included the names of two hundred senators, and two thousand Romans of equestrian rank. Each of the Triumviri made a sacrifice of private friendship, not to the public good, but to the resentment of his associates. Thus Lepidus consented to the murder of his own brother Paulus; Antony, that of his uncle Lucius; and Octavius, that of his friend Cicero, to whom he had promised protection.

While the proscription, which had been agreed upon by the Triumviri, deluged Rome with blood, Brutus and Cassius were strengthening themselves in Asia, by levying forces and collecting military stores, in expectation of the approaching contest. They succeeded in raising a large army, at the head of which they marched through Macedonia into Greece, to meet Antony and Octavius, who were advancing with forty legions to give them battle. The two armies met near Philippi, a city on the borders of Thrace, whose adjacent plain, surrounded by

hills stretching down to the sea-coast, was peculiarly favourable to military operations. Each camp was strongly fortified both by nature and art, and the forces on either side were nearly equal. The commanders contemplated, with anxious and agitated feelings, the issue of an engagement, which would end in victory or death; Brutus alone excepted, who waited, with the utmost tranquillity of mind, the day of battle, in which, if victorious, he expected to liberate his country from slavery; but, if conquered, to be himself liberated from an existence of which he had become weary. In a discourse with Cassius just before this memorable battle, he stated to his friend, that "he had once censured Cato for his act of suicide, as manifesting an impatient and rebellious spirit; but that he now considered it lawful, if Fortune should not smile upon them, to end his days in freedom and honour." In these sentiments, his colleague perfectly concurred, and fortified by this philosophical contempt of death, both repaired to the scene of action. After the signal for battle had been given, the legions commanded by Brutus rushed forward with such resistless fury, that the ranks of the enemy were quickly broken, and driven back to their entrenchments. But the wing commanded by Cassius was, in the meantime, completely routed by Antony, who opened to himself a passage through the enemy's lines, and took possession of their entrenched camp. Cassius, conceiving the day was inevitably lost, and mistaking a corps of cavalry that Brutus had sent to his aid, for a hostile force, in a fit of desperation, threw himself upon his sword, and expired. This catastrophe, when made known to Brutus, instantly turned his joy into the deepest sorrow. Though his stoical principles forbade him to discover any strong emotions either of triumph or regret, he was unable to suppress his feelings on this occasion, but tenderly wept over the remains of a friend, whom he denominated "the last of the Romans." Cassius was privately interred in the adjacent isle of Thasos, lest the knowledge of his death, if circulated through the camp, should dispirit the troops under his command. The hostile armies, whose loss had been nearly equal, remained inactive, though within sight of



each other, twenty days. The troops at length became impatient, and Brutus, influenced partly by the fear of desertion, and partly by a wish to decide the controversy, resolved to risk another general engagement, which took place on the same spot on which the former battle had been fought. The issue was fatal to his hopes; his army was totally defeated; and he himself with difficulty escaped from his enemies. Sheltered by an excavated rock from the vengeance of his pursuers, Brutus and a small number of faithful attendants spent the night in melancholy silence. In the morning, the vanquished general discoursed with the utmost composure on the misery of guilt, and congratulated himself and his friends, on having obtained by their virtues a reputation which tyrants and oppressors could never deserve. After which he earnestly requested Strato to perform the last office of friendship, by piercing him to the heart. But perceiving that Strato recoiled from the unwelcome task, he called upon a slave to execute it. "No!" exclaimed the friend of Brutus, "it shall not be said, that the Roman Patriot was indebted to a slave for a service which his affectionate friends withheld;" and instantly, with an averted countenance, presenting the point of his sword, Brutus fell upon it, and expired. It is not unworthy of remark, that all who had been actually employed in the assassination of Cæsar, the manner of whose death is recorded in history, either fell by their own hands, or by the swords of their enemies.

After the death of Brutus and Cassius, the Triumviri divided between themselves the provinces of the empire, and each, either really or apparently satisfied with his lot, hastened to take possession of his own department. The Eastern provinces were assigned to Antony, and amongst the rest, Egypt, of which the infamous Cleopatra was at that time regent, by permission of the Romans. This princess, whose licentiousness was equal to her beauty—the fascination of whose charms had formerly seduced Julius Cæsar, and long held the conqueror of the world in ignominious thralldom—this perfidious princess, still aiming at new conquests, exerted all her bewitching influence upon Antony, the new Governor of

Egypt. Caught in her fatal toils, from which he found it utterly impossible to extricate himself, this hardy warrior was quickly transformed into so devoted and abject an admirer, that his very existence seemed to depend upon her smile, though that smile was treacherous and destructive. At the profligate court of Alexandria, many successive months were consumed by Antony in licentious revels and enervating pleasures; whilst Octavius was engaged in carrying on a maritime war with the younger Pompey, and allotting portions of land to his veteran soldiers according to their merit. His conduct was so prudent, and his manners were so insinuating, that all classes of the Roman citizens became cordially attached to him.

After his domestic arrangements were completed, Octavius availed himself of different pretexts for proclaiming war, first against his colleague Lepidus, whom he deprived of all authority in the state, and afterwards against Mark Antony, who now presented the only remaining obstacle to his ambition. Antony was so spell-bound by the beauty and artifices of Cleopatra, that it was long before he could resolve to quit Egypt, and collect a sufficient fleet to encounter that of Octavius Cæsar. At length, however, he girded on his splendid harness, and placed himself at the head of his eastern fleets and armies, which are said to have contained almost as numerous a train of musicians, comedians, and buffoons, as of naval and military combatants. The decisive battle, which gave to Octavius Cæsar the undisputed empire of the world, was fought near Actium in Epirus. Its issue remained doubtful, till Cleopatra, who had brought with her the whole naval strength of Egypt, drew off sixty of her largest vessels in the midst of the engagement, and sailed towards Alexandria. Her infatuated paramour, unable to sustain her absence, followed her in a five-oared boat, leaving both his fleet and army to the mercy of his successful rival. Thus deserted by the general in whose cause they fought, the adherents of Antony surrendered to Octavius and his officers without further opposition.

Octavius Cæsar followed his vanquished colleague



into Egypt, who had resigned himself to chagrin from the time of his defeat at Actium, shutting himself up in a retired mansion, without society, without domestics, without even a bosom friend. But from this state of misanthropic melancholy, he was suddenly aroused by the intelligence, that a Roman fleet drew near to the port of Alexandria. Though ill prepared for the encounter, he placed himself at the head of a few mercenaries, and made a desperate, but unavailing attack upon his adversary. But again he had the mortification to witness the treachery of Cleopatra, who had given private instructions to the commanders of her fleet to surrender themselves to Cæsar. Urged to desperation by this act of perfidy, and afterwards by a false report of Cleopatra's death, he drew his sword, and gave himself a mortal wound. After the death of Antony, the perfidious queen tried all her arts upon the youthful conqueror without success. Perceiving that it was the purpose of Octavius, to deprive her of her crown, and exhibit her at Rome in his triumphal procession, she too resolved to avoid the disgrace by terminating her own existence. An asp was secretly conveyed into her apartment, whose mortal venom occasioned her death, and that of her two female companions.

The return of Octavius from Egypt, which took place in his fifth consulship, was succeeded by a splendid triumph, during which festival, several newly-erected temples were dedicated; largesses were distributed amongst the soldiers and common people; public games were celebrated with extraordinary pomp; and the whole concluded with closing the portals of the temple of Janus, which had continued open nearly two hundred years. The question now arose in what form the government should be administered in future, since the Triumvirate was abolished by the death of one, and the abdication of another of its members; and since the Consulate, the Tribunate, and all other offices established during the commonwealth, had become merely nominal. With great apparent reluctance, Octavius was at last prevailed upon by the Senate, to undertake the *sole administration of the empire*, under the

title of CÆSAR AUGUSTUS; a military guard was instituted to attend him on all occasions; and the Imperial Government, which had long been illegally exercised both by Julius and Octavius Cæsar, was now sanctioned by law, and dignified with all the splendour of royalty. This important event took place 724 years after the building of the city—474 after the expulsion of the Tarquins—and 28 years before the Christian Æra.

Plut. in vit. Brut. et Anton. Sueton. in August. Vell. Patere. lib. 2. Appian. lib. 3. Dio. Flor. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The most laudable design may be expected to fail, if pursued by illegitimate and dishonest means. It is not enough that the end be good—the means adopted for its attainment must be good also. This sentiment is abundantly confirmed by the facts stated in the preceding pages. The parties concerned in the death of Cæsar panted after liberty; they were ardently desirous of restoring the commonwealth; they conceived that the end would justify the means; and therefore resolved to pursue it, though it were by assassination and murder. But their hopes were blasted; the prize which seemed already within their grasp, was suddenly snatched from them; instead of the applause they had fondly anticipated from a grateful public, they were rewarded with universal execration; their names were cast out as evil, and their days spent without honour. Exiled from their beloved country, and harassed by their treacherous foes, they became weary of life, and in almost every instance terminated their own existence. Whilst the dispersion and untimely death of these assassins bespeak the retributive vengeance of the Most High, and proclaim to succeeding generations that the “way of transgressors is hard;” their disappointed expectations admonish us, that every hope of salvation will prove delusive which rests not on a scriptural basis, and which is not accom-



panied with the exercise of evangelical holiness. All the workers of iniquity will, in like manner, in the day of final retribution, be driven away in their wickedness, covered with shame and everlasting confusion.

To what a pernicious growth had the sin of suicide attained, at the period to which the present essay refers. Persons of every class in society, and under all circumstances of human life, became proficient in the art of self-destruction. Not only did philosophers and patriots, statesmen and warriors, compose the train of self-murderers; but libertines, courtesans, and menials mingled in the throng. Every one whose projects were crossed—whose hopes were blasted—whose circumstances were adverse—or whose pride was wounded—felt himself justified in the perpetration of this crime. In the disgusting procession which has just passed before our eyes, we have not only seen the philosophic Brutus, with apparent calmness and deliberation, taking the fatal leap into an eternal world; and his impetuous companion in arms, in a moment of desperation, blindly rushing to the tremendous verge: but these were followed by an abandoned libertine, and his infamous paramour, who after having drank to intoxication of the cup of sensual pleasure, reeled to the fearful precipice, and hurled themselves headlong into perdition.

The criminal attachment of Antony and Cleopatra, on which so many historians, both ancient and modern, seem to have dwelt with peculiar pleasure, and all the circumstances of which they have detailed with a mischievous minuteness, would have been wholly passed over in silence by the writer of these essays, but for the moral instruction it conveys. It may be profitable to glance for a moment at the interior of a heart, in which Pleasure (falsely so called) had set up her throne—to observe there the fever of passion raging, the venom of envy rankling, the scorpions of remorse devouring, and the flames of jealousy consuming the inmost vitals—to witness the satiety and disgust that attend, and the guilty terrors that follow the commission of sin—to mark the fearfulness and trembling, the horror and amazement, that overtake the emaciated libertine in the prospect of

dissolution. If sensual gratifications could have imparted happiness, the Roman Triumvir, when revelling at the court of Alexandria, must have been pre-eminently happy. But in the very lap of sensuality, he found himself the prey of chagrin and melancholy, from which he could find no shelter on this side the grave. So true is it that "lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

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## ESSAY II.

*On the Character and Reign of AUGUSTUS CÆSAR.*

FROM A. C. 28 TO A. D. 14.

IT is not easy to form a correct estimate of the talents and administration of Augustus, on account of the unqualified praises which had been lavished upon him by the writers of that age, whom he liberally patronized, and from whom our information respecting him is necessarily derived. That the state of the empire was most flourishing when he assumed the reins of government; and that, notwithstanding the proscriptions which disgraced his Triumvirate, the whole of his Imperial administration was characterized by clemency and moderation, cannot be doubted. His future conduct justifies the conclusion, that the cruelties of his youth were rather to be attributed to the unquiet spirits by whom he was surrounded, than to his own malignity of temper. If he had earlier enjoyed the friendship of a Mæcenas, instead of being associated with men like Antony and Lepidus, it is probable that the commencement of his public life would have been as humane and pacific, as its close.

Augustus well understood the character and disposition of the Roman people. He knew that beneath all their extravagant adulation and homage, there lay concealed an ardent love of liberty and an inveterate hatred



of tyrants. He had seen the rock on which his uncle Julius had split, and determined to shun it, by appearing to decline the honours that were voted him, affecting to shrink from the burden of governing so vast an empire, and at last reluctantly consenting to undertake it but for a limited time. This retiring modesty, whether real or feigned, added to urbanity of temper and condescending manners, public munificence, and an equitable government, secured him the affections of his subjects to a degree which has seldom been enjoyed by any monarch. It was highly gratifying to the Roman Senate to find that Augustus, instead of exercising that absolute authority which had been entrusted to him, referred all questions to their decision, and performed all public acts in their name; nor was it less gratifying to the people to observe, that all the ancient forms of popular election were kept up, that tribunes were still chosen, though their authority had ceased; and that delinquents were publicly tried in the forum, and acquitted or condemned according to law. In all the affairs of state, the Emperor is supposed to have acted by the advice and under the influence of his friend Mæcenas, who faithfully reproved his faults, pointed out his errors, warned him of the dangers that threatened his person and government, and administered the most salutary and excellent counsel. This distinguished Senator, who is rendered more illustrious by the benefits conferred on his country, and the patronage afforded to literature and the arts, than by the nobility of his birth, or the amplitude of his fortune, continued during many years to guide the counsels, and direct the public measures of Augustus, who was not insensible to his great worth.

The two first years of the imperial government of Augustus were occupied with rewarding his soldiers; instituting laws for the correction of public morals; and regulating the foreign provinces, which had become unsettled, during the late commotions. His accession had taken place in a time of profound peace, but it could scarcely be expected that so unwieldy an empire would long remain in a state of perfect tranquillity. Tidings were soon spread of insurrections in Gaul, Germany and

Spain, which by a judicious mixture of vigour and lenity, were quickly suppressed. For his successes in this war, he was indebted not so much to his personal efforts, (for he was naturally averse from military pursuits,) as to the talents and bravery of his generals, several of whom were of his own family. Amongst these officers, the lieutenant in whom he uniformly placed the highest degree of confidence was Agrippa, who had greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Actium, and who afterwards became his son-in-law.

But though the external affairs of Augustus were thus prosperous, not only in the commencement, but through the whole of his protracted reign—though he was cheered by the smiles, and entrenched in the affections of his devoted subjects—he was not a stranger to sorrow. He had, unhappily for himself, and for mankind, married Livia, the wife of Tiberius Nero, a woman of consummate art, and insatiable ambition. By her former husband she had two sons, Tiberius and Drusus; the former of whom it was the business of her life to promote to honour, though by the most nefarious means. There were several nearer relatives of Augustus, who were presumptive heirs to the crown, and, on this account, the objects of her most inveterate hatred. Some of these she is suspected of having taken off by poison, that an unobstructed course might be opened to the ambition of her favourite son Tiberius; and others died in their youth, deeply lamented by Augustus, and by the whole Roman people. The susceptible heart of this amiable prince was wrung with anguish, when, at different periods of his life, he was called to attend the funeral rites of several lovely youths, whom he had expected to succeed him in the empire, and to whom he was warmly attached. One of these was Marcellus, the son of his sister Octavia, and the first husband of his daughter Julia, a youth of most promising character and amiable disposition, of whom the Poet Virgil has left this honourable record: “The Fates exhibited him to the world, and then took him away, lest Rome should be too happy in possessing so invaluable a treasure.” After an interval of several years, Agrippa, Julia’s second



husband, whom after the death of Marcellus, Augustus had adopted, and on whom his chief hopes were placed, died in Pannonia, leaving two sons, Caius and Lucius, to occupy his place in the affections of the Emperor. This general, who might justly be considered the associate, though not the rival of Augustus in the government, had discharged every office of state both foreign and domestic, with distinguished ability and faithfulness. To the enemies of Rome, he had ever been an object of terror, but to his sovereign and fellow-subjects, of affectionate esteem. His death was felt to be a public loss and sincerely deplored by all the Roman citizens. Augustus himself pronounced his funeral oration, and caused his remains to be deposited in his own sepulchre. This event was quickly followed by the death of the Emperor's sister Octavia, and that of Drusus, the younger brother of Tiberius, who had acquired great celebrity by his victories in Germany and Gaul.

But none of these domestic calamities penetrated so deeply into the heart of Augustus, as the infamous practices of his daughter Julia, who gave herself up to the most shameless prostitution. In the first transport of passion, after the discovery of her guilt, the Emperor thought of putting her to death; but afterwards his parental feelings recoiled from so severe a measure, and induced him to banish her to the island of Pandataria, where she lived many years in retirement and obscurity under the care of her mother Scribonia, from whom Augustus had been long divorced. So deeply did he resent the dishonour brought upon his family by this profligate woman, that many years after, when the people solicited her recall, he refused, saying that "fire and water could sooner coalesce, than he and his daughter be reconciled;" and not unfrequently was he heard to express with a sigh his deep regret, that "he had not either lived unmarried, or died childless." All his remaining hopes were now fixed upon the two sons of Agrippa, Caius and Lucius, who had nearly arrived at maturity, when they were both suddenly cut off, not without suspicion of their death having been accelerated

by the artifices of Livia, to prepare the way for her son's elevation to the imperial crown.

But though bereft of all his domestic comforts, Augustus had the satisfaction of seeing his empire prosperous, and his subjects happy. All the provinces were in a state of tranquillity; commerce flourished, and literature advanced, beneath his patronage; the most salutary laws were enacted, and the ablest counsellors chosen to superintend the affairs of state. In this time of universal peace and unprecedented prosperity, a memorable decree was issued by Cæsar Augustus, that all the subjects of the Roman government in every quarter of the globe should be publicly enrolled. The obvious design of the Emperor in making this edict was to ascertain the strength, and increase the resources of his flourishing empire; but a far different and infinitely more important end was really answered by it. This imperial decree was intimately connected with an event which took place at this period, and which as far surpasses in interest and importance all other events recorded in history, as eternity with its awful realities rises above the trifles of time. It will be anticipated by the reader that the event now referred to, was the Incarnation of the SON OF GOD, who was born about this time at Bethlehem in Judæa, which though once the residence of a most illustrious monarch, had now become an obscure village, in a remote province of the Roman empire. It does not appear that this miraculous event attracted the attention of the Court of Rome, though it excited such alarm and jealousy in the breast of Herod, the Governor of Judæa, that he was induced to command the horrible massacre of infants, of which mention is made by the Evangelist Matthew. Yet little as it was known in Judæa itself, and wholly unknown as it probably was to the inhabitants of the distant metropolis, it was an event in which, politically as well as morally considered, the monarch and people of Rome were more deeply interested than in any which could occupy their attention: for not only were all the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures fulfilled by that memorable event; but the



basis was laid of a new empire, which should ultimately embrace every nation under heaven.

The advanced age and increasing infirmities of the Emperor now inclined him to retire as much as possible from public life. His first wish seemed to be, to resign the government into the hands of the Senate; but as this proposal was rejected, he devolved the executive government upon Tiberius, his adopted son and successor; who after having lived many years in retirement at Rhodes, had lately returned to Rome, and resumed the command of the armies. But though Augustus partially withdrew from the field of action, he continued with truly parental affection to watch over the empire, to guide the counsels and assist in the deliberations of the Senate, and to instruct Tiberius in the conduct of public affairs. Thus he proved himself in his old age what he had been called in his youth, the "Father of the Roman People." An insurrection in Illyricum, requiring the presence of Tiberius, Augustus accompanied him as far as Beneventum, where he was seized with a disease which quickly terminated his mortal existence. When he perceived his end approaching, he called for a looking-glass, caused his hair to be drest, as when he appeared in public, and then asked his attendants, "whether they did not think he had acted his part well;" and on being answered in the affirmative—"then give your applause," he exclaimed, alluding to the custom of the theatre, and almost instantly expired in the arms of Livia. The death of Augustus, which was carefully concealed for a considerable time from the Roman people, was no sooner made known, than the whole empire was plunged into the deepest distress; to which it is probable that the knowledge of the character of Tiberius, and dread of his future tyranny, contributed in no small degree.

There were many traits in the moral character of Augustus, deserving of particular notice. His heart was unusually tender, as is evident not only from his grief for the loss of relatives, but still more from the impression made by a disaster, which befel some of his veteran legions in Germany. A considerable body of Roman infantry, under the command of Varus, had been drawn

into an ambuscade, and put to the sword by their merciless adversaries. When the melancholy intelligence of this catastrophe reached the ears of Augustus, he was penetrated with the deepest sorrow, appeared for a considerable time in mourning, and was frequently heard to exclaim with evident emotions of sorrow, "Varus, restore me my slaughtered legions!" In every period of life, from extreme youth to old age, this amiable prince manifested the utmost abhorrence of libertinism and profligacy of manners. The fascinations of Cleopatra made no impression upon his juvenile heart but that of horror and disgust. After his accession to the throne his most severe laws were directed against sensualists and libertines; in consequence of which Ovid the poet was banished for his licentious writings; nor were even his own daughter and grand-daughter spared, when convicted of infamous practices. When enumerating the excellent qualities of this prince, it would be inexcusable to overlook his forgiveness of injuries, and kindness to his enemies. He proceeded more than any of the heathen princes celebrated in history, upon the principle of "overcoming evil with good." An instance is recorded which exhibits the character of this sovereign in a most interesting light. Cornelius Cinna, the grandson of Pompey, was detected in a conspiracy against the life of Augustus. On the day of trial, the Emperor not only forgave the convicted criminal, but addressed him in words to this effect. "I have twice given you your life; first, as an enemy; now, as a conspirator. And now I give you the consulship; let us therefore in future be friends, and only contend whether I shall be most generous, or you most faithful."

Sueton. in August. Tacit. Annal. lib. 1. Dio. lib. 53 et seq. Vell. Patere. lib. 2, &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

It is of importance, not only to princes, upon whom the happiness of myriads of their subjects depends, but



to persons of every rank and in every condition of life, that the companions of their youth be well chosen. For these early associates have in all cases a powerful, though frequently an imperceptible influence, upon the future character. But more especially, when the temper is amiable, the heart open to impression, the disposition generous and social, that influence, whether good or evil, will be proportionally increased. It was when a bond of fellowship subsisted between Augustus and Antony, that the former appeared vindictive and cruel; it was then that proscriptions and murders were assented to by Octavius, the guilt and disgrace of which principally belonged to his associates. But, happily for himself, and for his country, that alliance was of short duration. Before his habits were deeply rooted, or his character completely formed, he was detached from these vicious connections; an intimate and permanent friendship originated between him and Mæcenas, whose excellent instructions and counsels regulated his future conduct, both in public and private. If it be the privilege of any youth who reads these pages, to possess such a friend; one who faithfully reproofs his faults, and affectionately warns him of danger; whose constant endeavour it is to insinuate wisdom into his mind, and engage him in the pursuit of truth and holiness—that youth is earnestly exhorted highly to esteem and cherish such a friend; for his price is above rubies, and his worth above much fine gold. The benign influence of such a friendship may be the means of preserving from the path of the destroyer, and preparing for distinguished usefulness and honour.

The greatest degree of outward prosperity cannot insure happiness, or give to its possessor that tranquillity of mind which is essential to real enjoyment. Was there not every thing in the external condition of Augustus, which would seem necessary to the happiness of a prince; his subjects, affectionate; his arms, victorious; his empire, flourishing and united? Yet was his heart wrung with anguish; his days were spent in sorrow. Nor was that sorrow groundless; for he had repeatedly seen his fondest parental hopes blasted; his most flourishing gourd of domestic comfort had been withered and trodden in the

dust. Not only had he followed to the silent grave, many who had been "very pleasant to him in their lives," and from whom in death, his affections were not divided; but his had been the task most distressing to the heart of a parent—to remove from his embraces, a loved, but dishonoured child, who was lost to him in a sense far worse than that of death. None but the character who has met with this heaviest of human calamities, can fully sympathize with this amiable but afflicted monarch, in the mingled shame and anguish, indignation and horror, with which he was overwhelmed, on discovering that a daughter to whom he had fondly looked as the solace, had become the curse of his old age. Ah! how seldom does the abandoned youth, who gives himself up to the practice of iniquity, reflect on the distress of mind he inflicts on others, as well that which he must personally endure; how seldom does he consider that his infamy will not only drown his own soul in perdition, but will be as a sword to pierce the bowels of her that bare him, and like an oppressive burden will bring down the grey hairs of his father with sorrow to the grave.

Melancholy was the closing scene of the life of Augustus, in which, with a levity and profaneness highly unbecoming even in a heathen, who professed to have some expectation of an hereafter, he fancied himself an actor that had been performing a principal part in the drama of life, and was now retiring from the stage amidst the plaudits of the audience! How contemptible does that vanity and self-approbation appear, which discovered itself at that awful moment, in which all temporal dignities were fading on his sight, and when it might have been expected that he would be alike indifferent to the praise or censure of his fellow-mortals? Yet there are many who have enjoyed the advantages of Christian instruction, that look back with self-complacency on the part which they have acted in life, and seem to demand with their expiring breath, not only the plaudits of their fellow-creatures, but heaven itself, as the reward of their beneficence and virtues! To "rejoice in the testimony of our consciences that in simplicity and godly sincerity



we have had our conversation in the world," is not inconsistent with Christian humility; but to derive our latest consolation in death from this or any other source of self-approbation—to rest our hope of immortality on this or any other basis of self-confidence—is to cherish a fatal delusion.

"The kingdom of God came not with observation."  
"The manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh," attracted not the attention of the princes of this world. No one of the annalists of that age deemed it an event of sufficient importance to introduce into his pages. The least act of Augustus, or any of his courtiers, was trumpeted by fame throughout the Roman empire, and handed down to posterity by a host of flatterers; but none of all these Augustan writers proclaimed the birth of Jesus; though that event was attested by the most astonishing miracles, and attended with the most interesting results; though it was an event upon which angels gazed with wonder and delight, and which will employ the harps and songs of the redeemed to all eternity. Yet though the sovereigns of the earth knew not the Lord of Glory, when he condescended to appear in human form, they were secretly influenced to do that which the "hand and counsel of God determined before to be done." In order that the birth and lineage of the Incarnate Saviour might appear to be what the prophets foretold, a general enrolment of the unnumbered millions who were subject to the Roman government must take place; a decree must go forth from Cæsar Augustus that "all the world should be taxed." Thus did the monarch who then swayed the sceptre of universal dominion virtually pay homage to the *Babe of Bethlehem*, and prove to succeeding ages that he was the true MESSIAH.

## ESSAY III.

*On TIBERIUS and CALIGULA.*

FROM A. D. 15—42.

THE mild and splendid administration of Augustus was succeeded by a period of gloom and terror, from the recollection of which the benevolent mind recoils with abhorrence and disgust. All the subsequent series of Roman Emperors, with a very few exceptions, were distinguished alone by those flagrant vices and cruelties, which rendered them hateful to their oppressed subjects, and have branded their names with perpetual disgrace. The first of these monsters of depravity was Tiberius, who was nearly fifty-six years of age, when the death of Augustus Cæsar devolved on him the entire administration of the government, a considerable portion of which had been previously entrusted to his care. Accustomed from his earliest years to carry on a system of duplicity, that his vices might escape detection, and that his real character might not be penetrated by the Emperor and his counsellors, it was not difficult to continue the same arts of dissimulation, till he found himself in secure possession of the throne. When therefore the Roman Senate humbly solicited that he would undertake the government of the empire, with a well-feigned modesty, he first declined the task, then reluctantly consented to govern one of the provinces, and finally accepted of the crown, though penetrated with a sense of his unworthiness and insufficiency, and ardently desirous of enjoying repose!

Yet, practised as he was in hypocrisy and dissimulation, the ferocity of his temper, and the malignity of his heart, developed themselves in some of his first public acts. Scarcely were the ashes of Augustus deposited in the imperial sepulchre, when Agrippa, (the son of the general of that name, mentioned in the last essay,) was put to death by the express order of Tiberius: a mea-



sure, the injustice of which he in vain attempted to conceal, in the first instance, by pretending that the late monarch had left instructions to that effect; and afterwards, by threatening to prosecute the centurion, whom he had employed to execute the nefarious deed. This was followed by a course of yet more flagrant injustice towards Germanicus, whose amiable character excited his hatred, and whose increasing popularity, his envy. This interesting youth was, on many accounts, endeared to the Roman people. He was the elder son of Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, whose early death was universally and justly lamented. He had married Agrippina, the amiable and excellent daughter of Agrippa, and grand-daughter of Augustus Cæsar, by whom he had several sons, that promised to inherit their father's virtues. He had acquired a high degree of reputation by his victories over the Germans and Gauls; and especially, by having recovered the eagles and standards which had once belonged to the legions of Varus, whose massacre was considered the heaviest and most disgraceful calamity that had ever befallen a Roman army. The well-earned popularity of this distinguished general inflamed the jealousy of the tyrant, and prompted him to devise means of secretly effecting his death. With this view Germanicus was recalled in the midst of his career of victory, and sent with consular authority into Asia to conduct the Parthian war. At the same time, an unprincipled courtier, named Cneius Piso, was stationed in an adjacent province with private instructions from the Emperor, to counteract all the measures, and by every possible means to obstruct the success of Germanicus. When this was found too tardy, or too ineffectual a method of accomplishing his ruin, Piso and his infamous wife Plancina, adopted the more certain expedient of administering poison, by the effects of which, after having languished for some time, he died in excruciating agonies. The intelligence of his death, though its cause long remained unknown, plunged the whole population of Rome into the deepest distress. All public and private business was suspended; lamentations were heard from every quarter; and sorrow was written upon every coun-

tenance. It seemed as if the safety of the state, and the happiness of every individual were involved in the life of Germanicus, and irrecoverably lost by his death. When Agrippina arrived at Rome, bearing the funeral urn which contained the ashes of her deceased husband, the expressions of sorrow were renewed, in which Tiberius felt it necessary to join, that he might avoid suspicion. Shortly after, Piso was prosecuted by the Senate for the death of Germanicus and other crimes; the deserved punishment of which he escaped by committing suicide; and his wife Plancina, after several years had elapsed, was put to death by the command of Tiberius himself.

But though the wretched instruments of his tyranny were thus sacrificed, nothing could be more gratifying to the wishes of the Emperor than the crime they had perpetrated. Freed from a dreadful rival, whose presence had been a continual restraint, and whose image, when absent, had haunted him in every place, Tiberius now began to throw off the mask he had so long worn, and disclosed by degrees his real character. An ancient law, which made every offence against the Majesty of the Roman people, a capital crime, was now revived and applied by the tyrant to the execution of his most sanguinary purposes. All who were become objects of suspicion and jealousy to the Emperor or his courtiers, were summarily tried and condemned by this law. Those who were most distinguished by their birth, talents and fortune, were amongst its first victims. To this mode of revenge, Tiberius was instigated chiefly by the counsels of Sejanus, a Roman knight, who had insinuated himself into the confidence of the Emperor, by ministering to his criminal pleasures, and executing his most atrocious designs. This artful courtier, perceiving the natural indolence of Tiberius, undertook the sole management of all public affairs, and prevailed upon his imperial master to retire from Rome, and give himself up to the indulgence of his vilest appetites. The place to which he first retreated was the luxurious province of Campania, but afterwards, the island of Capræ, situate in the Mediterranean, near the coast of Naples. Here, secluded from the intrusions



of business, and surrounded alone by infamous and depraved characters, this wretched old man spent his days and nights in a ceaseless round of the most loathsome debaucheries.

In the mean time, Sejanus availed himself of the Emperor's name and authority, to cut off many of the senators, and principal citizens. Bloated with pride and self-importance, this royal favourite now formed the daring project of destroying all the presumptive heirs to the crown, and finally the tyrant himself, in order that the imperial diadem might encircle his own brow. He proceeded so far towards the accomplishment of his design, as to take off Drusus, the only son of Tiberius, by poison, and starve to death Nero and Drusus, the two elder sons of Germanicus; Caligula alone being spared on account of his extreme youth. The last stroke was just about to be put to this iniquitous scheme, by the assassination of the Emperor at Capreæ, when an intimation of the conspiracy was privately given to Tiberius, who instructed the senate by letter to put Sejanus to death; a command which was instantly complied with, from motives of private resentment, rather than attachment to the sovereign. The body of the late minister was dragged through the streets of the city by an enraged populace, and, after being literally torn in pieces, was thrown into the Tiber.

The detection of this conspiracy served but to increase the suspicion and heighten the cruelty of Tiberius. From this period his avarice became more insatiable; his profligacy and barbarity far exceeded all former bounds; all his subjects were considered and treated as enemies, whom he delighted to torture on the slightest grounds, and frequently for his gratification alone. Yet so degraded was the Roman character, that amidst all his excesses he was flattered in the most extravagant terms; temples were dedicated to him as a subordinate deity; his statues were erected not in Rome only, but in the distant provinces of the empire. Amongst other governors, who presented this homage to the tyrant whom they hated, Pilate, the governor of Judæa, distinguished himself by an attempt to set up the statue of Tiberius at Jerusalem;

but so averse was the whole nation of the Jews from this species of idolatry, that they ceased not from insurrections and tumults, till the imperial image was removed to Cæsarea.

Whilst the Tyrant of Rome was "running to every excess of riot," in the island of Capreaë, and the metropolis of the empire was thus grievously oppressed by his cruelties and extortions, a train of miracles were taking place in one of its distant provinces, which could scarcely be unknown at Rome; but which, if known, excited little or no attention. It was during the reign of Tiberius, that our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST exercised his public ministry in Judæa and Galilee; and those miraculous events transpired, recorded by the Evangelists in Sacred History, by which the most convincing demonstration was given of his divine nature and mission. These miracles were wrought beneath the eye both of Pilate and Herod, the one of whom presided over the province of Judæa, and the other, that of Galilee. Yet so little were these princes of the Gentiles affected by the facts that came under their observation, that they conspired with the Jewish Sanhedrim to put him to death. Whether a knowledge of the suspicious temper of Tiberius, and an apprehension that it would be reported to him by some spy on their proceedings, that "a pretender to the crown of Judæa had been spared;" or whether the desire of increasing their popularity amongst the Jews, most prevailed with these Roman Governors, it is not necessary to determine. It is however certain, that Pilate, at least, was convinced of the innocence of Jesus, and publicly avowed that conviction, at the moment in which he condemned him to suffer the ignominious death of the cross. On the authority of one of the earliest Fathers, it is stated, that Pilate wrote to Tiberius an account of the principal circumstances attending the death and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST; adding, that "the number of his disciples daily increased, and that he was worshipped by them as a god." Upon which information, Tiberius is said to have founded an application to the Senate, that the name of CHRIST might be enrolled amongst the gods of Rome; with



which, it is said, they refused to comply, and accompanied their refusal, with an order to all Christians immediately to leave the city. Whether this statement which is contained in one of the celebrated apologies of Tertullian, and does not appear to have been disproved by any of his heathen adversaries, is fully deserving of credit, must be left to the judgment of every discerning reader.\*

Scarcely can we endure to make an immediate transition from a theme so awfully sublime as that of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Incarnate Son of God, to contemplate the miserable end of the guilty tyrant, who still continued his licentious revels, though in the seventy-eighth year of his age, in the island of Capreæ. A dissembler to the last, he pretended to be in perfect health, when it was perceived by his attendants, that his death was near. He nominated Caligula, the only surviving son of Germanicus, as his successor, and expired with the impious prayer upon his lips, which he had often repeated, that "heaven and earth might perish with him." The tidings of his death occasioned the most rapturous demonstrations of joy throughout the empire. His name and memory were now execrated by those who had lately set up his statues, and professed a willingness to pay him divine honours.

Never did a Prince ascend a throne under more gratifying circumstances, than those in which Caligula commenced his public career. He was in the prime of youth, endeared to his subjects by the glory of his ancestors, and still more by the virtues of his parents, Germanicus and Agrippina, both of whom had fallen sacrifices to the cruel jealousy of Tiberius. He was called to occupy a throne, which had just been vacated by one of the vilest of mankind, who had gone down to the grave laden with the curses of his oppressed subjects. His youth had been hopeful, and it was conceived that the instructions and

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\* It may be remarked in this place, that Pilate was recalled from Judæa, and banished into Gaul, in the beginning of the following reign; where he became a prey to melancholy, and at length committed suicide.

example of his excellent mother, who had devoted herself to the education of her children, could not fail to have produced the happiest moral effects. The joy of the people was unbounded at the accession of this monarch to the throne; public sacrifices were decreed in every part of the empire, as expressions of gratitude to the gods of Rome for having favoured them with such a prince; and every title of dignity, which either affection or flattery could devise, was lavished on him. His first public acts corresponded with these elevated expectations. He repaired to the isles of Pandataria and Pontia, whence he brought home with great pomp the ashes of his mother and brethren, who had died in exile. He publicly burnt all the records that related to the accusation and sufferings of his relatives, first solemnly declaring, that he had not read their contents. Many public abuses were corrected, and many licentious characters banished from the city. But soon, very soon was the public joy turned into mourning and lamentation! A complete reverse of character and conduct took place—a reverse of so extravagant and almost incredible a nature, that it can be accounted for on no other principle than that of mental derangement. He became vicious and cruel beyond all conception; but his cruelty and vice did not so much resemble the dark and deliberate villainy of Tiberius, as the destructive rage of a maniac, who scatters abroad fire-brands, arrows, and death, and exclaims, “Am not I in sport?” To detail the principal events of his short but mischievous reign would therefore be, to write the disgusting annals of a lascivious madman and a malignant fury. A few of the lesser enormities and follies of his administration, selected without a particular regard to the order of time, from many others too loathsome to be repeated, will more than suffice.

The extravagant folly of Caligula, in assuming the titles of the gods and goddesses then worshipped in Rome; now requiring to be adored as Jupiter, Mars, or Apollo; and now as Juno, Venus, or Minerva; in having temples and altars dedicated to him, and priests appointed from amongst the principal senators to offer daily sacri-



fices upon those altars; in imitating the thunder of Jupiter, and boldly defying him to arms—all these can now be contemplated but as the flights of a disordered imagination, and would rather provoke a smile, than severe censure. But when we read of his excessive prodigality, his wanton and indiscriminate barbarity, and his worse than brutal sensuality, we are filled with horror and detestation of his unparalleled crimes. If he had been satisfied with constructing for his favourite horse a stable of marble, and a manger of ivory; with feeding it at his own table with gilded oats, and causing it to drink wine out of a golden cup; or even, with fulfilling his intention of making it a consul; succeeding ages would have ridiculed, but not execrated his memory. But when we are informed, that he murdered some of his subjects because they presumed to be more beautiful than himself; that in celebration of the erection of a bridge at Puteoli, he caused several ships laden with spectators to be sunk; that he committed incest with his own sisters; and replenished his exhausted treasury from the wages of prostitution; words are inadequate to express our abhorrence of his odious crimes. Two memorable expressions used by him, characterize more exactly than any recital of facts can do, the brutal ferocity of his temper. When looking with evident complacency on some unhappy wretches, who were put to death by lingering tortures, he turned to his attendants, and with an hideous smile, expressed his satisfaction, that “they felt themselves dying.” On another occasion, he expressed a wish, that “all the Roman people had but one neck, that he might dispatch them at a blow.” It can excite no surprise that such a monster was soon cut off. A conspiracy was formed amongst some of his officers, who had received repeated insults from him, at the head of which, was Cheræa, a tribune of the prætorian guards; by whom he was assassinated in his own palace in the twenty-ninth year of his age. The character which Seneca has given of him, was just though severe; “Nature seems to have produced Caligula,” said that philosopher, “that it might appear what miseries can

result from the greatest degree of vice, when armed with the most despotic authority."

Tacit. Annal. lib. 1—6. Sucton. in vit. Tiber. et Calig. Dion. et Senec. Oper. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The preceding facts prove that the best example will not of itself produce a virtuous character. Tiberius was brought up, and introduced into the government, under the eye of Augustus; of whose example he could not therefore be ignorant, and whose instructions must have been frequently repeated. Yet he was so far from profiting by this excellent model of a humane and generous prince, that he became the exact reverse of his illustrious predecessor; a degraded sensualist, and an inhuman tyrant. Caligula too had, in early life, possessed the advantage of parental instructions, illustrated and enforced by parental example. If he were too young, when Germanicus died, to have profited much by the personal instructions of his amiable and lamented father, there can be no doubt that it was the constant endeavour of Agrippina, his surviving parent, to set before her children the revered character, and memorable example of their deceased father, as a model for their imitation. Yet what a monster of depravity did Caligula become! Great is the force, and powerful the influence of example in many instances; the effects which have frequently been produced by this moral instrument are such as to encourage its most vigorous application; but yet the melancholy cases in which it has completely failed, are sufficient to prove that it cannot be depended upon as a *means*, and much less the *cause* of effecting a renovation of the heart, and a transformation of the whole character.

To what a dreadful extreme of guilt and depravity are vicious characters capable of proceeding, and how



rapid is their progress, when they give themselves up to the unrestrained indulgence of their appetites, and become the willing slaves of sensual passions! "They fear not God, neither do they regard man." The restraints of decency, the bonds of social order, the checks of conscience, and the obligation of laws, both human and divine, are rent asunder by them with as much ease, and as little remorse, as Samson broke the green withs with which he had been bound by the lords of the Philistines. But can such wicked devices, such hardened impiety, finally prosper? Though for a time the artifices of a Tiberius may prevail against the unsuspecting integrity of a Germanicus—though vice may seem to gain a temporary ascendancy over virtue—yet the end will discover, that "instruments of death are prepared for the wicked and the sharpest arrows of the Almighty ordained against the persecutors." It will eventually be found that the "righteous Lord loveth righteousness, but that the wicked and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth."

No scene can be imagined more deeply affecting than that of a hoary-headed sinner exhausting the last wretched remains of life in dissipation and sensuality. Who can endure to dwell upon the melancholy spectacle of "the poor old man," (as Tiberius emphatically and justly styled himself in his letter to the Senate,) immured in the island of Capreae—a place rendered infamous by the crimes which were practised on its polluted shores—surrounded by crowds of loathsome debauchees, scarcely inferior to himself in profligacy and vice—with his aged tottering limbs joining in the giddy chace of sensual pleasure, and with a tremulous faltering voice incessantly pouring out horrid imprecations—till feared, despised, and hated by all, he sinks into the grave, followed by the curses of millions of his fellow-mortals! Who can forbear to admire that patience and long-suffering, which permitted this old transgressor, not only to run his guilty round of threescore years and ten, but almost to complete a criminal course of fourscore years, before the measure of his iniquities was full? Or who can wonder that such a character should dread the thought of an

hereafter, and vainly wish that universal nature might be involved with himself in one common ruin?

It was in this period of abounding iniquity, that in the ineffable wisdom and goodness of God, the "mystery which had been hidden from former ages and generations was made manifest," in the life and death of JESUS CHRIST. At a moment, in which human depravity seemed to have exceeded all former bounds; and when vice, like a desolating torrent, had risen far above its ordinary level; it pleased God, that an expiation should be made for human guilt, in the person and by the sufferings of his equal Son. *Then*, when it might have been expected, that a horrible tempest of fire and brimstone would have been poured out upon a polluted empire and its abandoned monarch, divine mercy was signally displayed in making an effectual provision not only for the remission of the sins which were then committed, but for those of every class of sinners, in every period of time, and in every part of the world. Thus "where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded." But how inexcusable was the unbelief, and how just will be the final condemnation of those, who were the eye-witnesses of the miracles, which attended the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, without being convinced by them, that he was the Son of God; or, if convinced, without acting up to that conviction, by confessing him before men! Ah! how happy had it been for Pilate, if instead of proposing that CHRIST, of whose miracles he had heard so many things, and of whose innocence he was so fully convinced, should be enrolled amongst the gods of Rome, he had been led by what he had seen and heard, to renounce those idol gods for ever; if he had embraced that Jesus who had suffered on the cross, as the "true God and eternal life;" and even if he had died as a martyr to the Christian faith! Let it not however be forgotten by us, that attested as those miracles have been by a cloud of credible witnesses, and convinced as we must be, if we examine into the evidences of our holy religion, of its truth and divine authority; our guilt is not less, nor will our future condemnation and punishment be more tolerable, if we



disobey the gospel of Christ, than that of the murderers of the Son of God themselves.

It is gratifying to observe how widely the Christian religion had spread in a very few years after the death of Christ. If the decree of the Senate, which has been alluded to, was issued towards the end of the reign of Tiberius, commanding all Christians to leave the city of Rome, it proves not only that the Gospel of Christ had already reached the metropolis, but that it had made so many converts, and those converts were so well known, as to excite the jealousy of the existing government. If this fact be entitled to our credit, (and there seems no reasonable ground to withhold that credit,) it affords a striking comment on the testimony of the Sacred Historian, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed."

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## ESSAY IV.

### *On CLAUDIUS and NERO.*

FROM A. D. 42—69.

If the Romans had been really desirous of restoring the Commonwealth, and recovering their ancient liberties, no opportunity could have been more favourable, than that which the death of Caligula presented. No successor had been appointed by that frantic tyrant: all who possessed any natural claims to the Imperial Crown had been destroyed at different periods, Claudius alone excepted, whose stupidity of mind and insignificance of character sheltered him from suspicion and jealousy; and he concealed himself, as soon as he was informed of the Emperor's death, from an apprehension of sharing his fate. Cherea, and his associates, had also fled, after the accomplishment of their design, leaving the city a prey to anarchy and violence. The Prætorian and German guards availed themselves of the unsettled state

of the empire, to commit every species of depredation, and made the murder of the tyrant a pretext for promiscuous rapine, extortion, and carnage. In the midst of this public confusion, the Senate assembled; some of the senators ventured to declaim in favour of liberty and against tyrants; some were even proceeding so far as to propose the immediate abolition of the imperial government—when their deliberations were abruptly terminated by the intelligence, that Clāudius had been discovered by the prætorian guards, who had saluted him Emperor, and borne him in triumph to the camp. The fickle populace, in expectation of the gratuities and shows, which usually attended the election of a new sovereign, joined in the acclamations, and re-conducted Claudius from the camp to the city. The senators in the mean time, finding resistance vain, and possessing little energy of character, hastened to augment the train of flatterers, and present their servile homage to the man whom they despised and hated.

The reign of this contemptible monarch, which lasted about thirteen years, is scarcely deserving of notice; inasmuch as it exhibits nothing but a series of unjust and atrocious deeds, the guilt of which belonged rather to those advisers by whom he suffered himself to be governed, than to himself. One public enterprise alone distinguished his administration, and occupied the whole of his reign. This was the conquest of Britain, undertaken by himself in person, but completed after several years' struggle by his more able and successful generals. The Britons had hitherto been rather nominally than really a conquered people; but now a considerable Roman army, with great reluctance, passed over from Gaul; and subdued first the Iceni, who inhabited the interior of the island; and then the Brigantes, who occupied its northern provinces; and pursuing their victorious career, at length penetrated as far as South Wales, where they terminated the war by the capture of Caractacus, the British general, most celebrated for his valour and heroism. This intrepid warrior was conducted with many other distinguished captives to Rome; but, though conquered, his spirit remained unbroken.



With a dignity that astonished the Emperor and his courtiers, he pleaded his own cause and that of his subjugated country; and pleaded so forcibly, that he extorted a pardon for himself and his fellow-captives, from one of the most unfeeling and degraded of human beings.\*

The principal authors of the calamities which visited Rome at this period, were Messalina and Agrippina, the two wives of Claudius, than whom no characters more depraved and infamous can be imagined. The former of these, after having incited the Emperor to a thousand acts of cruelty and injustice, and long practised the most horrible and disgusting crimes in public, completed the measure of her guilt, by openly marrying, during her husband's absence, C. Silius, a Roman youth to whom she was passionately attached. Roused from his accustomed apathy by this daring and perfidious act, Claudius took measures for the seizure and execution of Messalina, and her adulterous associate, at the moment in which they had projected, and were on the point of accomplishing his death. Agrippina, the latter of his wives, who was sister to Caligula, and his own niece, was scarcely inferior to her predecessor in profligacy of manners, and far surpassed her in ambition. The great object which she constantly kept in sight, and to which all her efforts were directed, was the elevation of her son Nero, whom she prevailed upon Claudius to adopt and nominate as his successor, in preference to his own son Britannicus. Having thus secured the succession in favour of her son, she determined to finish her ambitious project, by removing the only obstacle to his immediate promotion. A dose of poison was administered to Claudius by her orders, which proving too slow in its operation, was aided by a poisoned feather, thrust down the throat of the unhappy monarch by his own physician, whom the Empress had bribed for that purpose.

Amongst the tragical events of this reign, there is one

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\* Hist. of Eng. Book I. Essay 3.

which deserves particular notice, as affording an interesting example of conjugal fidelity and affection. Cæcina Petus was accused to the Emperor, or rather to his wife, of having been concerned in the revolt of Camillus, who had made an unsuccessful attempt at wresting the sceptre from the unworthy hands in which it was placed, by stirring up an insurrection in Dalmatia. Orders were sent to apprehend Petus and bring him to Rome. His affectionate wife Arria, earnestly solicited permission to attend him, but was refused. She therefore hired a small vessel, in which she embarked at the same time with her husband, and accompanied him on his voyage. During the imprisonment of Petus; his only son, to whom he was ardently attached, died of a fever; but his death was carefully concealed by Arria from the knowledge of her husband. On being interrogated by him concerning the health of their son, she calmly replied, "he is at rest," and instantly rushed out of the dungeon to give vent to a flood of tears. According to the frequent practice of those times, orders were sent to Petus to put himself to death without delay; Arria, perceiving that he was irresolute, and rightly conjecturing that his reluctance to execute the imperial mandate chiefly arose from his ardent affection for herself, took a poniard, which she first plunged into her own bosom, and then presented it with a smile to her husband, saying, "It gives me no pain, my Petus." This was more than sufficient to conquer his irresolution, and induce him to imitate so heroic an example.

Notwithstanding the cruelties of this and the two preceding reigns, it appears from the statement of Tacitus, that the population of Rome at this time far exceeded all former limits; for, by a census taken a short time before the death of Claudius, it was found that the citizens amounted to nearly seven millions. If therefore the prosperity of the empire were to be estimated alone by the number of its subjects, or the extent of its territory, it might be concluded that never was Rome more prosperous than under the government of Caligula and Claudius; but if its strength and prosperity depended upon the wisdom of its rulers and the virtue of its



inhabitants, the only inference which can be drawn is the exact reverse of the preceding conclusion; for, upon this principle Rome was never more degraded, or verged more rapidly towards destruction, than at this melancholy period of her history.

NERO was scarcely seventeen years of age, when his ambitious mother Agrippina placed him on the imperial throne. Though inexperienced and wholly untried, as a public character, the highest hopes were entertained respecting his future administration. These expectations were chiefly founded on the wisdom, integrity, and high reputation of SENECA, to whom his education had been entrusted. That philosopher, who was a native of Spain, had been banished to the island of Corsica, through the influence of Messalina, but was afterwards recalled by Agrippina for the sole purpose of instructing her son in those several branches of learning, for which he was so justly celebrated. Seneca not only possessed considerable influence over the conduct of his royal pupil during his minority, but after he had ascended the throne, the moderation, clemency, and wisdom, that characterized the first years of Nero's administration, are chiefly to be attributed to the continuance of that salutary and benign influence. During five years, the government of this juvenile Emperor was equal to that of the wisest and best of princes. He professed to take the character of Augustus as his model in public and private life, whose institutions he revived, and whose actions he studiously imitated. But after this period, a dreadful reverse took place; his public character deteriorated so rapidly, that in a very short time, from having been one of the most promising, he became the most hateful and sanguinary of princes. The maxims of his excellent tutor were soon forgotten; his influence was entirely lost; and his counsels no longer restrained the tyrant from the most flagrant vices. Grieved and disappointed, this venerable guide of his youth retired from the court, purposing to spend his few remaining days in literary retirement. But this was too great an indulgence. It ill accorded with the malignity of a tyrant, who had caused his own mother to be murdered, and had contemplated

with pleasure the spectacle of her mangled and lifeless body, to suffer this aged philosopher to enjoy the repose which his elegant villa afforded, and the happiness of an endeared domestic circle. The malice and cruelty of Nero quickly followed him to his loved retreat, and tore him from the arms of his beloved Paulina. He died by opening his veins, and about the same time, the poet Lucan was put to death in the same manner.

A conspiracy, which was detected in Rome about this time, and was found to include many of the principal citizens, furnished a pretext for these and many similar acts of cruelty. Some were induced by torture, not only to make a confession of their own guilt, but to enumerate others, who were entirely ignorant of the plot. Of these innocent sufferers, it is generally believed, both Seneca and Lucan were examples; the manner and circumstances of whose death were such as to excite an unusual degree of attention. The latter died as a poet, repeating some lines of his *Pharsalia*, which exactly and beautifully represented his own situation. The former sat calmly conversing with his friends on literary and philosophical subjects, whilst life was exuding from every vein, and dictated discourses to his secretaries, which were read with the deepest interest after his decease. Paulina, his affectionate and devoted wife, earnestly solicited, and at length obtained his permission to have her veins opened at the same time; but when she fainted with the loss of blood, her domestics bound up the wounds, and thus preserved her from death. Yet though she survived her husband several years, it is said that the characters of grief were never erased from her countenance, nor would she consent to be clad in any other than mourning attire.

The follies of Nero were no less extravagant than his cruelties. His vanity induced him to court the applause of the public on the stage, where he frequently performed, though wretchedly, yet with unbounded acclamations, as a singer and a musician. Not satisfied with the constrained plaudits of the inhabitants of Rome at these disgraceful exhibitions, he visited Naples in the character of an actor, and from thence proceeded to Greece, to



contend for the prizes at the public games. So versed were the degenerate Greeks in all the arts of flattery, that they decreed him no less than eighteen hundred crowns, with which he returned in triumph to his capital. The public rejoicings occasioned by the Emperor's return, after having obtained the prizes at the Olympic, Pythian and Nemeæan games, (all of which, out of compliment to their illustrious visitor, were celebrated in the same year,) far exceeded in splendor, any which had greeted the most renowned generals after their most successful campaigns.

The reign of this profligate Emperor was further disgraced by the first general persecution of the Christians. The most severe measure which had previously been taken against them, was their expulsion from the city in the reigns both of Tiberius and Claudius. But now they became the unoffending objects of the most sanguinary rage of a merciless tyrant. After having amused himself with setting on fire the metropolis of his empire in several places, and thus occasioned the most destructive conflagration, he basely attempted to avert from himself the infamy of the deed, by imputing it to this despised sect. A persecution followed, which continued to rage more than four years with the utmost fury; during which period multitudes of Christians perished by excruciating tortures, and ignominious deaths. The Emperor's gardens was the spot fixed upon for these savage entertainments; in which, we are informed that many, clad in the skins of wild beasts, were torn in pieces by dogs; some, covered with wax and other inflammable materials, were set on fire by night, to illuminate the gardens and gratify the malice of the tyrant, who feasted his eyes upon the horrid spectacle; and others, amongst whom the apostle Peter has been generally included, were crucified in the streets of the city. The concurrent testimony of the most ancient ecclesiastical historians proves, that the apostle Paul was beheaded at Rome during this sanguinary reign, by the express order of the tyrant, who was enraged beyond measure at the discovery of several converts to Christianity, even in his own household.

The period now drew nigh, in which this imperial

murderer was to be arrested in the midst of his career of blood, and summoned before a higher tribunal, from which there could be no appeal. A general insurrection broke out in all the provinces of the empire at almost the same instant. Vindex, the general of the Roman army in Gaul; Galba, the governor of Spain; and the legions in Germany, Africa, and several parts of Asia, with their respective commanders, at the same time erected the standard of revolt; determined to throw off a yoke which had become intolerably oppressive, or perish in the attempt. Yet notwithstanding the formidable appearance of this insurrection, Nero remained still at Naples, immersed in sensuality and intemperance, and more intent upon exhibiting his new musical instruments, than on making preparations against the danger which threatened his person and government. The wildest schemes of revenge were projected by him, but happily he now wanted the power to execute them. He gradually perceived himself deserted by all his former flatterers, and the wretched instruments of his criminal pleasures. Vain were his attempts to engage the prætorian bands in his defence; the greater part even of his domestics fled, and left him without the means either of defence or flight. On learning, however, that Galba, who had been made Emperor by the troops, had entered Rome in that character; that the Senate had decreed his death, and dispatched persons to apprehend him, he was urged by his terrors to attempt an escape by night. Phaon, one of his freedmen, on whom he had formerly lavished favours, now offered to conduct his fallen master by a private track to his country-house, at which the wretched tyrant had no sooner arrived, than it was occupied by a band of prætorian guards, whose orders were, at all events, to secure his person. Dreading similar cruelties from an enraged populace to those which he had frequently inflicted, he now determined to destroy himself; but was unable to resolve what instrument to employ for that purpose. At length, when the soldiers were breaking into his apartment, with a trembling hand, he presented the point of a dagger to his throat, which was pressed forward by one of his domestics, and inflicted a mortal wound. Thus



ignominiously perished a tyrant, whose name has been deservedly branded with lasting infamy, in the thirty-second year of his life, and fourteenth of his reign.

Tacit. Annal. lib. 11—16. Sueton. in vit. Claud. et Neron. Dion. Cass. lib. 63, &c. Oros. Euseb. &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The character and reign of Claudius demonstrate, that great weakness is perfectly compatible with great wickedness. Splendid talents, and extraordinary natural or acquired endowments, are not necessary to qualify a person for attaining a fatal pre-eminence in guilt. Destitute of all these, he may, under the guidance of others, or by the impulse alone of his impetuous passions, become a tremendous scourge to mankind, and a hateful monster of iniquity. Despicable as were the talents, and insignificant the previous character of Claudius, no sooner was he advanced to the imperial dignity, than he rendered himself conspicuous by his crimes; in the number and heinousness of which, none who preceded or followed, seem to have surpassed him. The truth is, a sinful course is like gliding down a smooth and easy descent, in which neither skill nor strength is requisite to proceed with increasing rapidity to its extreme verge. “One sinner,” and he, the most contemptible, may easily “destroy much good.” But to be eminently useful—to prove a public blessing—to climb the heights of piety and exemplary holiness—these arduous but noble objects of Christian ambition call for no ordinary measures of wisdom and strength from above; they require a vigorous as well as “patient continuance in well-doing.”

In the preceding facts, we see the female character in its most degraded, and in its loveliest form. The odious characters of Messalina and Agrippina form a striking but horrible reverse to the heroic examples of conjugal fidelity which the wives of Petus and Seneca presented. The two former have been justly branded with perpetual

infamy, as the most dissolute and abandoned of their sex—the two latter have been deservedly classed with the most tender and affectionate of women—the most devoted and faithful of wives. The former disgraced their imperial rank, and sank themselves by their vices beneath the vilest of their subjects—the latter adorned and dignified a comparatively lowly station, rendering it far more illustrious by their conjugal virtues, than it could possibly have been rendered by any accession of outward splendour. Yet even here it is necessary to qualify our praise, and restrain our admiration. The resolution not to outlive the endeared objects of their affection, and even to arm them with resolution by their own example, however it may accord with the romantic feelings of a heathen or christian enthusiast, will not endure the sober test of enlightened reason, or the yet higher and infallible criterion of divine Revelation. If the conduct of Arria or of Paulina were investigated by these standards, it would appear, that in attempting to render indissoluble, ties of a most endearing though subordinate nature, far more sacred and obligatory bonds were forcibly rent asunder; and that, while borne along by the laudable impulse of attachment to the creature, they were insensible to the higher claims of the divine CREATOR.

How impenetrably mysterious do many of the dispensations of Divine Providence appear in the present life! How difficult is it to reconcile some of the events that occur in the history both of empires and individuals with our imperfect and limited conceptions of the power and goodness of God! Why was such a hateful monster as Nero permitted to exist? why so long spared? why suffered not only to imbrue his hands in his mother's blood, who, vile as she was, had yet no ordinary claims upon his affection and gratitude—but also to shorten the days of the venerable guide of his youth, the virtuous Seneca—to terminate abruptly the zealous and faithful labours of the holy apostles Paul and Peter—and to cut off, by the flaming sword of persecution, many sainted martyrs, “of whom the world was not worthy?” Did we not know that there is a day of final retribution, when all the mysteries of Providence will be solved, and all the



apparent inequalities of the divine government, fully vindicated before an assembled world; it would appear strange and incredible that atrocities like these should be permitted within the dominions of the Righteous Sovereign of the Universe, whose will none can controul, and whose power none can effectually resist. But assuredly the great day will declare it: then will it distinctly appear, not only that all these events took place by the permission of Him, “who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,” but that, from these apparent evils, were educed the best and happiest results. It will be found that tyrants, like Nero, were but the “rod of his indignation” by which he saw fit to punish his adversaries, and dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel—that the fury of these oppressors, like a refiner’s fire, served but to purify the Church of Christ—that the rough blasts of adversity were intended to scatter more widely the seeds of divine truth, and produce in future ages an abundant harvest from every quarter of the globe—and, finally, that the rage and cruelty of such persecutors as Nero, were but like chariots and horses of fire, which transported the apostles and martyrs of Jesus Christ to the realms of light and immortality, where they were put into the immediate possession of their promised crown of glory. And if ends like these are answered, who shall presume to arraign the wisdom or goodness of the Supreme Governor, or say with presumptuous impiety to the Ruler of Nations, “What doest thou?”

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## ESSAY V.

*On GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, and VESPASIAN.*

FROM A. D. 69—79.

THE revolution, which occasioned the death of Nero, did not terminate with that event. The Roman armies

stationed in the most distant provinces began to feel their importance, and became fully sensible of the commanding influence they possessed in the state, whenever they chose to exert it. Each of the armies had its favourite commander, who was elevated to the imperial dignity, and forced upon the Senate and people of Rome, by the troops whom he commanded. Thus, in little more than twelve months, there were three Roman generals, who successively occupied the throne; all of whom were displaced in their turn by more successful candidates. As the respective reigns of these short-lived Emperors were remarkable for nothing but an ineffectual struggle to preserve the power which they had justly acquired, it will not be necessary to enter minutely into the character and history of their administrations.

The first of these was SERGIUS GALBA, a general highly esteemed, not only by his own troops, but throughout the empire, for his wisdom and valour; who was seventy-two years of age, when he was called from the government of Spain to wear the imperial diadem. But the capricious legions which had contributed to his promotion, almost immediately repented of their choice; especially when they found him disposed to restore military discipline; and restrain the excesses which were now commonly practised throughout the army. The transition was too rapid for the existing state of society, from long indulged dissipation and luxury, to the severity and rigour with which Galba attempted to repress these irregularities. His economy was ridiculed as avarice; and his respect to the laws, as proofs of imbecility and weakness. The venal conduct of his three favourite ministers, by whom he suffered himself to be governed, completed the alienation of the troops, and prepared them for revolt; at this crisis Otho, one of his principal officers, who had hitherto appeared warmly attached to his interest, perceiving the general disaffection, addressed the soldiers under his command in an inflammatory speech, so suited to their taste, that they immediately rewarded him, by declaring him Emperor. This daring but successful measure was quickly followed by the death of Galba, who was murdered in the forum by a



troop of soldiers sent from the camp for that purpose, after a reign of scarcely seven months.

OTHO ascended the throne through the influence of the prætorian guards, who now began to assume to themselves the right of imposing a sovereign upon their fellow-citizens. He had been a favourite of Nero, and was frequently entrusted by him with the most important, and sometimes the most infamous commissions. Educated in such a school, he was not likely to be a severe moralist, or a rigid disciplinarian; nor is it improbable, that chiefly on this account, he was acceptable to the soldiers who elected him. Scarcely had he grasped the imperial sceptre, when the unpleasant tidings reached his ear, that the legions in Germany, conceiving themselves as well qualified to elect a sovereign as the rest of their brethren in arms, had proclaimed Vitellius Emperor. Each party appealed to the sword; the armies engaged in this controversy on either side were numerous, and nearly equal; several battles were fought with doubtful success; but, in the end, the veteran legions of Vitellius prevailed, and Otho's army was completely routed. After this decisive engagement, Otho collected his principal officers, and in a valedictory address, advised them to submit to Vitellius; but, for himself, he expressed his fixed determination to sacrifice his life for the welfare and peace of the empire. In the following night this resolution was carried into effect; for, after having dismissed all his attendants, he took a dagger, plunged it into his side, and expired; thus terminating, by what was deemed an heroic act, a tumultuous and unsettled reign of little more than three months.

VITELLIUS was at a distance from his army when he received intelligence of the complete victory obtained by his generals. He hastened to the field of battle, feasted his eyes upon the putrid carcasses of his slaughtered enemies, and evinced the most savage exultation when Otho's head was brought to him by his soldiers. The habits of this general had long been sensual in the extreme; his disposition was well known to be ferocious and brutal; and his whole character contemptible; yet so abject was the present condition of the Roman Senate,

and so entirely dependant upon the caprice of the legionary forces of the empire, that as soon as certain information was received of the defeat and death of Otho, with one consent they proclaimed Vitellius Emperor; and vied with each other in the earliest and most extravagant expressions of homage. Yet notwithstanding their obsequious flatteries, the new Emperor and his troops hastened to the capital, and entered it in battle array, as if it had been a conquered city given up to plunder. Many cruelties were practised, and many depredations committed by his licentious troops, before order and tranquillity could be restored; and these horrors of war were succeeded by a still more destructive series of gluttonous festivals and loathsome debaucheries, the disgusting records of which exceed all credibility.

Whilst Vitellius was exhausting his revenue, and rendering himself odious by his prodigality and gluttony, the Roman legions in the Eastern provinces of the empire had, with one consent, invested Vespasian with the imperial purple. That general had acquired great reputation by his successes in Britain, during the reigns of Claudius and Nero; and subsequently by his repeated victories over the Jews, who had revolted from the Romans, and were resolved to regain their independence, or perish in the attempt. He was now sixty years of age, and felt, or professed to feel, an extreme reluctance to embark at so advanced a period of life in so hazardous an enterprise. But the demands of the troops in Egypt, Judæa, Syria, and Achaia, were so pressing that he could no longer resist. As soon as it was known throughout the empire, that Vespasian had been chosen Emperor, almost every province declared for him, and manifested the warmest zeal in his service. It was with extreme difficulty that Vitellius could be induced to believe that so general a revolt had taken place, or to make preparation for a civil war, which was now inevitable. At length, two of his best generals took the field at the head of the legions, which still remained faithful to their oath of allegiance, and waited the arrival of Vespasian's lieutenant, who was rapidly advancing towards Italy. The defection of the adherents of Vitellius, and the valour of



those of Vespasian, soon terminated the contest. The most sanguinary part of the proceedings took place within the walls of Rome, where the partisans of the two imperial rivals fought with the utmost fury, and filled the streets with the bodies of slaughtered citizens. Amidst this carnage and confusion, some of the soldiers of Vitellius set fire to the Capitol, in which a small number of Vespasian's followers had taken shelter, and quickly reduced that beautiful edifice to a mass of ruins.

The end of the wretched Vitellius was as miserable, as his life and reign had been disgraceful. A party of Vespasian's soldiers discovered him in an obscure corner of the imperial palace, who, after having fastened his hands behind him, and fixed the point of a sword under his chin, to prevent him from concealing his face, drew him, half naked, to the forum, where, amidst many gross indignities, his pampered and unwieldy body was pierced with many wounds. Thence it was ignominiously dragged through the streets of the city by an indignant populace, who had lately witnessed with disgust his worse than brutal sensuality, and cast into the Tiber.

VESPASIAN was now declared Emperor both by the senate and army; but did not immediately visit Rome, either on account of the unsettled state of the empire, and the probability of some new rival entering the lists, or because of the unfinished state of the Jewish war, in which he had been several years engaged. In the following spring, however, he committed this arduous enterprise to his son Titus, and repaired to the capital of his empire, where he was received with unbounded joy. This joy had in many former instances proved fallacious; but in the present, it was but the prelude to a mild and prosperous reign, which shone with brighter lustre, on account of the dark and tempestuous night of horror by which it had been preceded.

As the war with the Jews forms the most prominent feature of Vespasian's reign, and was so manifest a fulfilment of prophecy, the subsequent part of this essay will be chiefly devoted to the narration of its principal events.

This memorable and disastrous war began in the

twelfth year of Nero's reign. The arbitrary conduct of some of the Roman governors stationed in Judæa, and the licentious proceedings of the troops under their command, were the apparent causes of the rebellion. But the real cause was, the spirit of discord and faction which prevailed amongst them, and prompted them first to murder each other, and then to provoke the vengeance of the Romans. The first general, who was sent with an army to reduce them to subjection, was Cestius Gallus, who was soon obliged to retreat with considerable loss.—Vespasian was next appointed to this service, as the ablest of the Roman generals then living; who collected a powerful army from the adjacent provinces, which he suddenly poured into Galilee, and with which for a time he bore down all opposition. The cities of Gadara, Jotapata, Tiberias, Tarichæa, and Giscala, were successively taken by storm, after having been most obstinately defended by the Jews, and deluged with a tremendous slaughter. One of these fortresses was commanded by Josephus the historian, who continued to defend the post which had been assigned him to the last moment, but was at length compelled to surrender, and was treated with the utmost kindness by Vespasian and Titus. The capture of these fortified cities placed the whole of Galilee in the hands of the Romans, who were about to proceed to the invasion of Judæa, when the death of Nero, and the consequent disorders of the state, prevented further operations against the Jews, and encouraged that infatuated people to persist in their desperate revolt.

Instead, however, of availing themselves of the respite afforded them by the departure of Vespasian and Titus into Egypt, to concentrate their forces, and garrison their fortified towns, this wretched people became worse enemies to themselves than the Roman legions had been. The whole country was filled with banditti, who committed the most dreadful atrocities and murders. The principal cities, and especially Jerusalem, were torn by factions, whose leaders, under a pretence of religious zeal, incited their followers to carnage and plunder, and armed citizens and brethren against each other.



The three principal factions within the metropolis of Judæa, were headed by Simon of Gerasa, John of Geschala, and Eleazer the leader of the zealots. One of these parties occupied the temple, and polluted it with torrents of human blood; the two others stationed themselves in different parts of the city. Conflicts daily took place between these hostile factions, in which multitudes perished, and many of those provisions which had been laid up in granaries against the approaching siege were consumed by fire. To this circumstance is principally ascribed, the dreadful famine, to which they were afterwards exposed, the horrors of which exceeded all their former sufferings.

Such was the distracted state of this once peaceful and favoured city, when Titus invested its walls with a Roman army. Never was there a general who laboured more constantly and diligently to soften the rigours of war, and to save his enemies from ruin; yet never was there a siege attended with circumstances of deeper misery and more heart-rending distress. The most pressing overtures were repeatedly made to the infatuated inhabitants of this guilty city, by the compassionate chief, who wept over their sufferings, and even condescended to implore a reconciliation. Yet so bent were they on their destruction, that every overture was rejected with the utmost scorn; internal faction raged as violently as before, though famine and pestilence daily swept away thousands of miserable victims. The obduracy of the besieged at length seems to have roused to indignation and excited to revenge even the benevolent Titus himself; for, it is stated, that during this protracted siege, so many of the Jews were taken and crucified without the walls of their city, that neither space nor materials could be found for the crosses of the unhappy sufferers. After many unsuccessful attempts, and the frequent destruction of his machinery, a practicable breach was at length effected by the army of Titus, and the castle of Antonia taken, which commanded the greater part of the city. And now the humane conqueror again paused to offer terms of accommodation,

and, if possible, to save the city and temple from desolation.

But these, as well as former pacific overtures, were contemptuously rejected by the famished inhabitants of the city, who mistook the clemency and humanity of the Roman general for cowardice. Irritated by their scornful treatment of his ambassadors, he now determined to carry on the siege with the utmost vigour. A wall was built by his troops, which completely encircled the city, and by cutting off all supplies, involved the inhabitants in the utmost distress; insomuch that mothers were reduced to the dreadful necessity of protracting a wretched existence, by feeding upon their infant offspring. Yet even these extreme sufferings did not abate the violence of internal dissension; for John and Simon still continued, amidst all the ravages of pestilence and famine, to assist the common enemy, by destroying their fellow-citizens. The command was at length given by Titus to his soldiers to set fire to the gates of the city, which was taken by storm, and afterwards given up to plunder. Amidst the general confusion, a flaming torch was thrown by a private soldier into the temple, which was quickly reduced to ashes, notwithstanding every effort on the part of the besieging army to extinguish the flames.

Hitherto the Jews had buoyed themselves up in a presumptuous expectation that they should be preserved by some special interposition of Divine Providence in their favour. But now that their temple was in ruins, they considered themselves deserted of God, and resigned themselves to all the anguish of despair. They now became the easy prey of the Romans, who rased the city and temple to their foundations, and carried into captivity all those who had survived the horrors of the siege. It has been computed by the Jewish historian, from whose affecting narrative most of the preceding facts have been derived, that more than a million of this devoted people perished during the siege, and that 97,000 were taken captive by the conqueror, and dispersed through the provinces of the Roman empire.

Having completed the Jewish war, Titus returned in



triumph to Rome, where he was received with the warmest acclamations of a grateful people, who were no less dazzled by the splendour of his victories, than charmed with the urbanity of his disposition, and condescension of his manners. The rest of Vespasian's reign was chiefly occupied with domestic arrangements of the most salutary nature; such as, rebuilding the Capitol and other edifices, which had fallen into decay; restoring discipline in the Roman armies, and especially amongst the prætorian cohorts, which were become exceedingly dissolute; purifying the courts of judicature from bribery and corruption; and collecting those public records which had been scattered and lost amidst the late commotions. Whilst engaged in these laudable pursuits, he was removed by death, in the tenth year of his reign, and sixty-ninth of his age; deeply regretted by all his subjects, and deservedly honoured by succeeding generations.

Tacit. Hist. lib. 1—4. Sueton. et Plut. in vit. Galb. Othon, &c. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. Dio. lib. 64—66, &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

How many correctives to human pride and ambition do the records of Antiquity contain! In the short space not only of a few years, but even of a few months, how many instructive lessons were presented, tending to impress a deep conviction upon the mind of the vanity, the uncertainty, and the misery attendant upon worldly grandeur. With what rapidity did these phantoms of royalty glide along, and how suddenly did they disappear. How full of cares and sorrows, solitudes and dangers, were the fleeting honours which these short-lived Emperors pursued with so much ardour, and maintained with such fatal obstinacy! It is worthy of remark that not one of the Roman Emperors from Augustus to Vespasian died a natural death. Tiberius was smothered by his successor—Caligula, assassinated by his soldiers—Claudius, poisoned by his wife—Nero, to escape greater

tortures, destroyed himself—Galba was murdered by a band of his revolted troops—Otho terminated his own existence—and Vitellius was torn in pieces by his enraged subjects. Such are the wages of sin; such, the rewards of worldly ambition! Yet, strange as it may appear, uninstructed by these repeated and impressive lessons, succeeding generations proceed with unabated ardour in the same perilous career, court similar dangers, endure equal sufferings, and reap at last the same bitter fruits. And still more strange is the melancholy fact, that an immortal crown is despised and trodden under foot by these votaries of ambition, though the prize is both certain and glorious. Would to God that equal efforts were made, and equal ardour displayed in the pursuit of that eternal inheritance and unfading crown, which is the “mark of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The calamities which befel the Jews in the reign of Vespasian, are deeply interesting, whether they be contemplated as an awful display of the righteous vengeance of the Most High against a people laden with iniquity and ripe for destruction; or, as a manifest fulfilment of prophecy, and especially of the predictions recorded by the sacred evangelists; or, as affording the most convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity, and of the divine Authority and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The Jews had been for many ages a people distinguished from all others by privileges and sacred institutions. To them belonged exclusively the Oracles of God. Theirs were the patriarchs and prophets, holy men, whom God endowed with the Spirit of Revelation, and instructed in the knowledge of his will. They were claimed by JEHOVAH as his peculiar portion, and “the lot of his inheritance.” Yet amidst all, they were disobedient, rebellious, and ungrateful; a people prone to idolatry; proud of their privileges, and incorrigible under the chastisements of the Almighty. Though long threatened with judgments, they were spared from age to age; a succession of holy prophets was raised up to admonish and reprove them; and at length the Son of God from



heaven himself visited them, dwelt among them, taught in their streets, and performed many miracles in the midst of them. But the heavenly messengers were scorned, persecuted, destroyed—the incarnate Redeemer himself was despised, rejected, and, with wicked hands, crucified and slain. This was the consummation of their guilt—this, the beginning of their sorrows. In how awful a sense was the imprecation of these murderers fulfilled, within a few years of the death of Christ, “His blood be upon us, and on our children.” The storm, charged with divine vengeance, gathered, lowered, and finally burst with tremendous fury upon the heaven-devoted people. The first vial of wrath was poured out upon Galilee, the place where many of the miracles of Jesus were performed, and where, notwithstanding these mighty works wrought in the midst of them, the guilty inhabitants besought him to depart out of their coasts. But vials of augmented vengeance were reserved for that abandoned city, which had been the scene of the most affecting tragedy ever exhibited to men and angels. The infatuation that possessed the inhabitants of Jerusalem—their obstinate rejection of pardon and mercy when not only offered, but pressed upon them by the clemency of the conqueror—the manner and extremity of their sufferings—all bespeak the direct and awful interposition of the God of Vengeance for their destruction.

These calamities were foretold in general terms by several of the Jewish prophets, but by our Saviour especially, in language so express and remarkable, that they might almost be considered as an historical record of the transactions to which they refer. When we read in Sacred History, that our Lord assured his disciples, who were admiring the magnificence of the temple, that “one stone would not be left upon another, which should not be thrown down;” that “the tribulation of those days would be great, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be;” that “there should be great distress in the land, and wrath upon the people” of the Jews, who should “fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive into all nations;”

and that "Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled;"—when these and many similar predictions, are read, and compared with the authentic statement in profane history of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, and the consequent dispersion of that ancient people; it seems impossible to resist the conviction, which arises from this comparison, that those prophecies were literally fulfilled, and that in a most remarkable manner, by these events.

Nor is this all; if the conviction produced in an unprejudiced mind from this comparison were followed up, it would lead to a persuasion, amounting to a "full assurance of faith," that the Holy Prophet who foretold these things was indeed the "CHRIST, the Son of the living God"—that the Gospel first proclaimed by him, and afterwards by his Apostles, is the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God"—and that the Sacred Scriptures, which contain these remarkable predictions, were dictated by the Spirit of Truth, and are amply sufficient to "lead us into all truth."

While the heart-rending tale of the miseries of this infatuated people is repeated, it is consolatory to reflect, that "there is hope in their end." They are not finally cast off: nor have they fallen beyond recovery. These broken branches will assuredly be grafted in again, and partake once more of the root and fatness of the olive-tree: or, to express the same animating promise of Holy Writ without a figure—their privileges will be restored, their covenant blessings renewed, and in a far higher sense than before, JEHOVAH will be their God, and they shall be his people.



## ESSAY VI.

## On TITUS and DOMITIAN.

FROM A. D. 79—96.

No two characters could be more opposed to each other both in disposition and habits, than the sons of Vespasian, who succeeded him in the government of the empire. The one, amiable, modest, benevolent, generous, and forgiving—the other, ferocious, proud, inhuman, covetous, and resentful; the one, universally loved and honoured—the other at once hated and despised by all his oppressed subjects. The transient reign of Titus was sufficient to prove him a public blessing, and justify the title given to him after his death, “*The delight of the human race.*”<sup>\*</sup> The longer administration of Domitian was so filled up with cruelty and crimes, that he can only be considered as the reproach and curse of the age in which he lived. The subsequent facts will be sufficient to shew that the praises which have been lavished by contemporary historians on the one—and the censures and execrations which have been poured on the memory of the other, were by no means unfounded.

TITUS was associated with his father in the Consulship during seven successive years, previously to the death of the Emperor, and had been already entrusted with many important offices, the duties connected with which he had discharged with fidelity and honour. His education had been liberal, and his literary attainments were unquestionably great. In his youth he was addicted to unlawful pleasures, and both disgraced himself, and offended the Roman people, by his criminal attachment to the beautiful but infamous Bernice, who was at once the sister and wife of Agrippa, and before whom the Apostle Paul had eloquently pleaded the

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\* “*Deliciæ humani generis.*”

cause of Christianity. These vices, however, and especially the latter most offensive one, were abandoned by him, when called by Vespasian's death, to the sole administration of the empire. The amiableness of his disposition first appeared in his conduct to his brother Domitian, whose ambition led him haughtily to demand an equal share in the government, and who under this pretence, excited seditions in the city; yet Titus was so far from resenting the arrogance of his younger brother, that he satisfied himself with admonishing and entreating him with tears to return his affection with similar kindness and love. It seemed to be the uniform desire of this kind-hearted monarch, to gratify and oblige his subjects, and that not so much from the love of popularity, as from a wish to confer happiness on his fellow-creatures. All his public edicts bespoke his humanity and tenderness; the clemency with which he treated criminals and rebels evinced the mildness, rather than the policy of his administration; and even in the public shows and exhibitions with which he frequently gratified his subjects, he consulted their taste and pleasure, more than his own indulgence.

Several public calamities with which the Romans were visited during the short reign of Titus, afforded him an opportunity of exhibiting more fully the benevolence of his heart. The first of these was a tremendous eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which consumed, with torrents of burning lava, several large cities and their inhabitants. Amongst these were Pompeii and Herculaneum, whose ruins, to this day, afford materials for the curious researches of classical antiquarians. In this volcanic desolation, whose ravages extended more than a hundred miles in circumference, the elder Pliny perished by suffocation; having imprudently ventured too near to the crater of the mountain, for the purpose of observing the phenomena it presented. This calamity was followed by a fire at Rome, which raged three days and nights; and by which many public edifices of great value and beauty were reduced to ashes. A dreadful plague quickly followed this conflagration, which is said to have swept away ten thousand of the inhabitants daily.



All these public desolations touched the compassionate heart of the Emperor, who exerted himself to the utmost to diminish their violence, and administer relief. The buildings which had been destroyed by fire, he undertook to replace at his own expence; the sufferers in Campania received from his private liberality as well as his imperial munificence, a compensation for their losses by the late eruption of Vesuvius; and every expedient, which either superstition or humanity could devise, was employed to stay the progress of the malignant disease, and console those who had been bereaved by its pestilential influence.

Towards the close of the reign of Titus, new honours were decreed him by the Senate, not only on account of the completion of several works of national importance, but likewise on account of the victories of the renowned Agricola in Britain; the particulars of which belong more properly to the history of that country.\* But scarcely were these laurels entwined around his brow, by a grateful and affectionate people, when he was seized with a malady that terminated his life and reign in the forty-first year of his age, and after a prosperous administration of little more than two years. It is painful to be constrained to add, that at the approach of death, this amiable, but self-deluded prince, lifted up his hands and eyes toward heaven, and complained of the severity of the Fates, in removing him so prematurely from this world; affirming at the same time that "on a review of life, he knew but one action of which he had any reason to repent." But, on the other hand, it is recorded to his praise, that when, on one occasion, he recollected at night that he had conferred no favour on any one of his subjects through the previous day, he exclaimed with evident emotion, "I have lost a day."

DOMITIAN, the brother of Titus and younger son of Vespasian, now ascended the throne. His youth had been spent in voluptuousness, which neither the reproofs nor the authority of his father could restrain. Like most

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\* Hist. of Eng. Book I. Essay 4.

of the tyrants who had preceded him, the commencement of his reign was characterized by moderation, and a regard to the public good. Some of his first laws were salutary; and his first public measures, popular and humane. But the mask of humanity was not long worn. From the solitary cruelty of shutting himself up in his palace to kill flies, he quickly proceeded to the most atrocious of crimes. The talents and reputation of Agricola, who was still pursuing his victories in Britain, first excited the envy of this tyrant, who therefore recalled him in the midst of his most splendid successes, and deprived him of all authority. To avoid the resentment which evidently lurked in the breast of his sovereign, Agricola retired from public life, and spent his days in the most unostentatious obscurity. But thither the jealousy and malice of Domitian followed him; for it was generally believed that poison was privately administered to him, by the Emperor's orders; an opinion which was strengthened rather than disproved by the assiduous attention he paid to that illustrious general during his illness, and the regrets expressed after his death. The character given of this distinguished commander by his justly-admired biographer, Tacitus the historian, represents him as adorned with every private and public virtue, who, though cut off in the vigour of his days, had acquired an imperishable name—a reputation more bright and durable than that which the stateliest monuments of brass or marble could confer.

It soon appeared that the nerve of the empire was broken, when Agricola expired. After that event, frequent irruptions were made into the frontier provinces both in Europe and Asia, by the Sarmatians, the Dacians, and other barbarous tribes, who ravaged with impunity the Roman territories, and cut off the legions that were sent to oppose them. These repeated losses were occasioned not so much by the want of internal resources, as by the misguided policy of Domitian, who had withdrawn his confidence from his most experienced commanders, and entrusted his armies to the most worthless and contemptible characters. Indeed to possess any order of talent, whether civil or military, literary or



scientific, was then sufficient to constitute the most heinous offence, and deserve the severest punishment. Some persons of distinction were condemned for their consanguinity to the imperial family—others, for their great wealth, which fear or vanity had induced them to bequeath after their death to the Emperor—some were executed for their wit, and others for their learning—some, for having composed popular books, and others, for having invented useful discoveries. In a word, nothing was spared, which could tend in the remotest degree, to eclipse the glory, or expose the injustice of the despot, who filled the imperial throne.

The vanity of this Emperor was not less impious and absurd, than his cruelties were excessive. He required his statues to be erected in every city, and in almost every public edifice, and prohibited that they should be made of any other materials than gold or silver. He impiously claimed divine honours and titles, not suffering any of his subjects to address him, by any other appellations than those of *Lord* and *God*. Multitudes of victims were daily sacrificed upon altars dedicated to this new deity. If any refused to join in presenting this idolatrous homage to the tyrant, they were marked out as objects of his most cruel persecution. On this account, the Christians, who had become exceedingly numerous, were treated with the utmost severity. Orders were sent to all the governors of the provinces to apprehend, imprison, torture, and put to death, all who professed the Christian religion, without regard to age, sex, or condition in life. Amongst those who suffered martyrdom in this second general persecution, two are mentioned by ancient historians, who were nearly related to the Emperor himself, Clemens or Clement, who was his cousin and colleague in the consulship; and Domitilla, the wife or niece of Clemens. The alleged crime for which these distinguished persons suffered, was atheism; by which was always understood in that age, a refusal to worship the gods of Rome. Tradition has referred to the latter end of Domitian's reign, an event, which though remarkable will appear by no means incredible, when it is remembered how often the special protection of the Almighty

has been vouchsafed to his favourite servants. It is related of John, the beloved disciple and evangelist, that, about this time, he was condemned to death, by being cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but escaped unhurt. Whether this be authentic or not, it is certain that he was now removed from the superintendence of the Christian Church at Ephesus, and banished to the desolate isle of Patmos.

It is not surprising that the reign of Domitian was disturbed by conspiracies and insurrections; or that he became a torment to himself, by his suspicions and jealousies. Some of these rebellions; (particularly that of Lucius Antonius in Upper Germany,) assumed a formidable appearance, and occasioned the destruction of many, who either were, or were suspected of being conspirators. Amongst other causes of jealousy, it is related, that the rumour reached the Emperor's ear, of an opinion which prevailed in the East, and was supposed to be founded on an ancient prophecy, that "some descendant of David, king of Israel, should establish an universal empire." This was sufficient to arouse all his fears. The most diligent search was instituted amongst the Jews into the lineage of David, and inquiries were made after his surviving descendants. Two persons in lowly condition and of obscure birth, were at length discovered, and brought before Domitian, on the charge of consanguinity to the royal house of David. These were grandsons of the Apostle Jude, the brother of our LORD. On examining them, the Emperor found that they were Christians, who, far from expecting the establishment of a temporal kingdom, had deeply imbibed the principles of their Master, who taught that "his kingdom was not of this world." These holy confessors were dismissed with contempt; but from that time the Emperor seems to have been less suspicious of his Christian subjects, and in some measure to have relaxed the severity of his measures against them.

The sanguinary course of this tyrant now drew near to its close. His cruelties became unbounded, and intolerable. Among the rest, it was discovered by the Empress Domitia, that her name was inserted in the list



of those intended for speedy execution. Roused by her fears, no less than by her resentments, she communicated the alarming fact to several senators of distinction and officers of the household, who like herself were marked out for destruction. A conspiracy was entered into by these individuals, who could only defend themselves from tyranny by the assassination of the tyrant. This was effected at midnight within the walls of his palace by several of his own household, in the forty-fifth year of his life, and sixteenth of his iniquitous reign.

Sueton. in Tit. et Domit. Tacit. in Agric. et Hist. Dio. Cass. lib. 66, 67. Plin. Oros. Tertull. et Euseb. Oper.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

A wide difference is frequently observable in members of the same family, and even in children of the same parents. The Patriarch Isaac had but two sons, the one of whom was Jacob, a believer in the same promises, and a partaker of the blessings of the same covenant with himself; but the other was Esau, a man of violence and blood; who, after his father's death, became an idolater, and was justly excluded from the participation of the patriarchal blessing. Vespasian, in like manner, had two sons—one the comfort—but the other, the curse of his old age. Whatever allowance it may be necessary sometimes to make for different tempers, and natural tendencies arising from constitutional or other causes; it cannot be doubted that in many of these cases, the difference may be accounted for by education alone. In that which has been just adverted to, it is easy to perceive, why Titus grew up in habits of moral restraint, whilst his brother Domitian became a voluptuous libertine, and an inhuman tyrant. Titus was early withdrawn from the contaminating atmosphere of the Roman Court, and placed under the immediate eye of his excellent father; but Domitian was suffered to remain a witness of all the enormities, and a partaker of the

guilt and infamy of the profligate reigns of Nero and Vitellius. If parents, from motives of ambition and covetousness, expose their children to moral defilement—if they place them, where they are compelled to inhale the pestilential vapours of pride and sensuality—what can they expect, but that they should prove sources of shame and sorrow to themselves, and of extensive misery to their social connections?

How lovely a disposition was that, which prompted Titus to seek his chief enjoyment in promoting the felicity of others; and led him to deplore that day as lost, in which he was not conscious of having augmented the sum of human happiness. O! who can forbear to wish that on this amiable natural stock had been engrafted, the precious germ of Christianity! What clusters of exquisite fruit, would then have enriched and adorned his future character and life! Methinks he was just such an one as the benevolent Jesus, had he been then on earth, would have looked upon, and loved—yet to whom he would have said, with peculiar emphasis, “One thing thou lackest.” Scarcely can we refrain from weeping over his death-bed scene, and saying, “Deluded mortal, by what test hast thou tried thy former life, that but one action should be discovered which seems to call for contrition before thy Maker? It is not necessary that the hallowed beams of the divine law, or the brighter lustre of the everlasting Gospel, should be brought to bear upon the sins of thy youth, and the transgressions of thy maturer days, in order to cover thee with shame before the God of holiness and truth. Let but conscience bear an impartial witness, and thine own heart will condemn thee.” Yet thus deluded by the pride of their hearts, and the blindness of their understandings, how many quit life with self-approbation, and presumptuous confidence! To how many might it be said with truth in their expiring moments, “Is there not a lie in thy right hand?”

It appears from ecclesiastical history, that in this early period of Christianity, there were many whose names are not enrolled in the lists of fame, but who were animated by the same heroic piety, which fortified



the breasts of the three Jewish youths, recorded in Scripture, and of Daniel, their illustrious fellow-captive. These confessors, (many of whom belonged to what is called the *weaker sex*, but which has ever been valiant for the truth upon the earth,) replied to the impious demands of a haughty tyrant that they would acknowledge him as a god: "Be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Notwithstanding all his imperial edicts, and the excruciating tortures with which those unjust decrees were armed, these Christian heroes "kneeled upon their knees, and prayed and gave thanks to God as aforetime." Nor did all this fury of the oppressor avail to pluck up and destroy the tender vine, which the right hand of the Most High had planted. On the contrary, the more it was shaken by the wintry blast, the deeper were its roots, and the more richly laden its widely-extending branches. Never yet have persecuting edicts, or penal statutes, directed against conscience, answered the purpose, for which they were designed. They have never succeeded even in extirpating heresy, much less can they prevail against the impregnable bulwarks of truth and holiness.

If the tradition relative to the evangelist John be authentic, it demonstrates that the servants of Christ are invulnerable, till their work is done. Furnaces may be heated seven times hotter than usual; lions may be famished to render them more furious and savage; cauldrons of boiling oil may be prepared; but if these men of God, for whose destruction they are intended, are raised up for further labours, or designed to receive additional revelations; the "fire shall have no power over their bodies, nor shall an hair of their heads be singed"—"their God will send his angel to shut the lions' mouths;" or the boiling cauldron shall prove but a refreshing bath. The venerable Apostle was to receive brighter and more glorious, though deeply mysterious revelations in the isle of Patmos, than those with which his earlier years had been favoured. Then, indeed, he had reclined on the bosom of his incarnate Saviour, and enjoyed his gracious

smiles—but the form in which that Saviour then appeared was lowly and obscure; the form not only of man, but of a servant—it was reserved for the hoary hairs of this venerable saint to see his ascended Lord, arrayed in those forms of divine majesty, and to hear him proclaiming those divine titles, which are so sublimely described in the Apocalypse.

How frequently have wicked men been made the unwilling instruments of conferring signal benefits on the Church of God! Of this the banishment of John was an example. It was doubtless a source of grief to the Christians at Ephesus to be deprived of their beloved pastor—to see him torn from their arms at so advanced an age—and stationed in a remote and dreary clime, where he would be in danger of perishing for want. But little did they, or his cruel persecutors know, the valuable results which should arise, not to themselves alone, but to the Church in all succeeding ages, from this arbitrary and unjust measure. When contemplating these mysteries of the God of Providence, it surely becomes us with humble gratitude and devout admiration, to exclaim, “He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”

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## ESSAY VII.

*On NERVA, TRAJAN, and ADRIAN.*

FROM A. D. 96—138.

DOMITIAN was the last of the *twelve Cæsars*, a very small proportion of whom have any claim upon the respect or even the indulgence of posterity. If an exception be made in favour of Augustus, Vespasian, and Titus, all the rest were, in a greater or less degree, public scourges and monsters of iniquity. A more excellent dynasty now arose, which included a succession of wise and humane princes, during a space of nearly



a century. This series commenced with NERVA, who was by birth an Umbrian, and by descent a Cretan; but whose private virtues and public reputation pointed him out to the Senate, as the most proper person to be entrusted with the imperial dignity. In his youth, he had distinguished himself as a poet; his poems consisted chiefly of epigrams, and were so admired by Nero, that for their sake alone, he rewarded Nerva with a prætorship, and with a statue in his palace. In subsequent years he withdrew almost entirely from public observation, and is supposed to have been banished by his jealous predecessor to Tarentum, on account of the admonition of an astrologer, who warned him to "beware of Nerva." When called to the government of the empire by the united suffrages of the Senate and prætorian guards, he consented, though of a timorous disposition and retiring character, from a regard to the public good, rather than from motives of private ambition. He had attained his sixty-fourth year, and was the subject of many bodily infirmities, when this important trust was committed to his hands.

The administration of Nerva was characterized by lenity rather than vigour. It was mild, pacific, and tolerant; but blamed by some, as imbecile, and too indulgent to offenders. If the excellency of a reign be estimated by the splendid enterprises, the brilliant victories, or the pompous triumphs with which it has been graced, on none of these grounds has that of Nerva any claim to admiration or applause; but if the repeal of obnoxious and tyrannical laws—the redress of public grievances—the protection of the property and lives of his subjects—and an exuberance of kindness, which disarmed his enemies and transformed them into friends—if these be characteristics of a wise and good monarch, Nerva must unquestionably be enrolled in this revered and honoured list. One instance of weakness is recorded which must be ascribed to the timidity of his disposition, rather than to the dictates of his judgment. The mutinous soldiers who had formed Domitian's guard loudly demanded the death of the conspirators, who had assassinated that tyrant, and Nerva was prevailed on, not

only to comply with the claims of these mutineers by sacrificing the persons from whom he had received his crown, but even to return them public thanks for having executed the worst of criminals.

This injudicious acquiescence in the arrogant demands of the troops encouraged them to commit greater excesses, and rendered it necessary that the aged monarch should seek the aid and support of some more vigorous coadjutor, who might relieve him of a burden which pressed too heavily on his declining days. Intent alone upon the welfare of the empire, he adopted Trajan, who was then governor of Lower Germany, and universally esteemed the most skilful general, and ablest statesman of that age. The influence of Trajan's name was such, that when his adoption was generally known, the mutinous soldiers immediately returned to their allegiance, and perfect tranquillity was restored. Soon after this important step had been taken, and ambassadors dispatched to inform Trajan of his unexpected honours, Nerva was seized with a fever of which he died, after a short reign of one year and four months.

The greatest honour is reflected upon the memory of this prince by his having been the first heathen sovereign, who issued an edict expressly for the protection of the despised but numerous sect of Christians. Not only were the sanguinary laws of his predecessor on this subject repealed, but those who had been banished from Rome and other cities of the empire, were recalled, and permitted without restraint or molestation to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences. In consequence of this first *Toleration Act*, John the Evangelist returned from the isle of Patmos, and resumed the superintendence of the Ephesian Church, where he is supposed soon afterwards to have died in extreme old age, pronouncing with his latest breath, the exhortation which he had exemplified through life, "Little children, love one another."

TRAJAN was a native of Italica near Seville in Spain, and about forty-five years of age, when he was proclaimed Emperor. He had been placed in his youth under the tuition of Plutarch, the celebrated biographical



historian, to whose valuable writings, constant reference has been made in the preceding essays.\* But the greater part of his life had been spent in the Roman camp, and his talents were chiefly military. He departed from the line of policy which had been pursued by all the Roman Emperors since Augustus, by aiming at the extension of the empire, and annexing to its present unwieldy growth, additional and more remote provinces. Intent upon this object, he began with retaliating upon the Dacians the ravages they had committed in the Roman territories during the reign of Domitian, by the invasion of their country. His first expedition was attended with brilliant success, and terminated in compelling Decebalus, the king of Dacia, to sign a treaty, by which he surrendered his arms and military stores to the conqueror, and became a tributary prince. This galling yoke was soon thrown off by the Dacians, who were again conquered by Trajan, in a second and more decisive expedition, which ended in the capture of the Dacian metropolis, the death of Decebalus, and the reduction of the whole kingdom into a Roman province. On account of these successful campaigns, Trajan was honoured with two splendid triumphs.

The conquest of Dacia revived the spirit of military ambition amongst the Romans, which had long slumbered; and reminded them of the days of the commonwealth, when the terror of their arms penetrated to the remotest climes. Ambassadors were now sent from the most powerful monarchs of the East to conciliate the favour, and court the alliance of Trajan. The kings of Parthia, Armenia, Edessa, and Mesopotamia, vied with each other in expressions of homage and acts of submission, as this monarch proceeded in his victorious march.

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\* That distinguished Biographer is said to have written a letter to his former pupil at the commencement of his reign, in which he gave him much wise and excellent advice, and concluded with declaring that if his future government should prove unjust and tyrannical, that letter should be a public testimony, that Trajan had not ruined the Roman empire by the advice and sanction of his preceptor Plutarch.

through their territories, as far as the river Tigris, over which he constructed a bridge, as a memorial of the extent of his conquests. Nor was this enterprising sovereign satisfied with making even the Tigris an eastern boundary of the Roman empire. He proceeded to occupy Seleucia, and take possession of Ctesiphon, the capital of Parthia; after which he visited Babylon, and, having discovered the palace of Alexander of Macedon, performed a variety of superstitious rites on the spot where that insatiable conqueror ignobly perished. Fired with a similar ambition, Trajan now ardently desired to attempt the conquest of India, but was checked in his career by the intelligence of insurrections in several of the provinces, which he had lately annexed to the empire. The principal authors of these revolts were the Jews who had been dispersed through those countries after the destruction of Jerusalem, and who now expected the speedy dissolution of the Roman empire. This hostility of the whole nation of the Jews, which was not confined to one province, but manifested itself at the same time in almost every part of the empire, occasioned the severe measures which that monarch adopted towards the close of his reign against this unhappy people, multitudes of whom were cut off by the sword, and treated with the utmost barbarity.

These, however, were not the only cruelties which disgraced the reign of Trajan. He was a persecutor of the Christians, whose rapid increase, both in numbers and influence, excited his alarm. From the correspondence between this Emperor, and Pliny the younger, who was appointed to the government of Bithynia, it appears that in some of the provinces the number of Christians was so great, and their influence so considerable, that the idol temples were almost deserted, and scarcely could purchasers be found for the meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. In answer to the inquiries of that distinguished scholar, in what manner he should treat persons who proved to be Christians, and whom he describes as “a harmless sect, accustomed to meet before day-break to sing hymns to Christ as a God, and bound by an oath to abstain from all manner of vice”—the Em-



peror instructed his minister “not to search for the Christians, but if they were brought before him, to punish them.” In this persecution it is affirmed, that Simeon, the venerable president of the Christian churches in Judæa, and Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, suffered martyrdom; the former by crucifixion, and the latter by being torn in pieces of wild beasts. The death of these two aged saints made a deep impression, not only on the Christians themselves, many of whom eagerly rushed forward to embrace the crown of martyrdom; but on the heathen also, who were astonished at the intrepidity and even extacy, with which these holy martyrs endured all the agonies of a violent death.

Trajan was returning from his eastern expedition, and anticipating a most magnificent triumph on his arrival at his capital, when he was seized with a distemper which in a few days terminated his mortal career, and with it, all his ambitious projects. This event took place in the twentieth year of his reign and sixty-third of his age. His ashes were brought to Rome in a golden urn by his wife Plotina, and interred beneath a stately column which he had lately erected in the centre of a spacious square, that long continued to bear his name. It would, however, be unjust to the memory of this monarch to contemplate him merely as an ambitious conqueror, and a persecutor of the disciples of Christ. There were many excellent traits in his character and government, which in part counterbalanced these evils. He was condescending to all classes of his subjects, ever ready to listen to their complaints, and redress their wrongs. The maxim by which he professed to act was, “to treat his subjects as he would himself wish to be treated by his prince, if he were in a private station.” So far was he from indulging a suspicious temper, that when he was admonished by some false friends of the treachery of his confidential favourites, he went to them, unarmed and alone, to shew that he still reposed the utmost confidence in those suspected traitors. These, and many similar instances of generosity and kindness, greatly endeared him to his subjects, insomuch that after his death the customary benediction pronounced upon a new Emperor was

a prayer, that he might possess the fortune of Augustus and the goodness of Trajan.

ADRIAN, who was also a Spaniard, and related by marriage to Trajan, succeeded him in the government. He is supposed to have been chiefly indebted for his election to the partiality and friendship of Plotina, Trajan's widow, who affirmed, and even produced a forged document to prove, that the late Emperor had adopted Adrian, as his son and successor. He was at Antioch when Trajan died, and was immediately saluted Emperor by the troops under his command; which election was afterwards confirmed by the Senate, who were not ignorant of his superior talents and commanding influence. He was remarkable for strength of memory, versatility of genius, and laborious research. His studies had included every branch of literature and science which had then been discovered, in all of which he was no ordinary proficient. He was constantly surrounded by philosophers, mathematicians, poets, orators, and artists, in whose society he greatly delighted, and whom he liberally patronized. Like his predecessor, he was affable and condescending to his inferiors; kind and forgiving to his enemies: but, unlike him, he was rather disposed to contract than to extend the limits of the empire, and preferred to relinquish the late Asiatic conquests, rather than involve himself in perpetual contests with the inhabitants of those remote provinces.

Adrian had not been long in possession of the crown, when a conspiracy was detected into which four persons of consular rank had entered, who were summarily executed by the Senate, though without the knowledge or consent of the Emperor, if his own most solemn testimony may be accredited. He now resolved to take the tour of his vast empire, that he might inquire into abuses, and, that, like the sun, he might not illuminate one spot merely in the centre of his dominions, but dispense benefits and blessings amongst all his subjects in every quarter of the globe. Such at least is the representation given by himself of the design of his journey, which, interrupted alone by occasional visits to his metropolis, occupied nearly the whole of his reign. He first tra-



versed Gaul and Germany, where he spent almost a year in restoring the ancient military discipline amongst the legions stationed in those provinces, and examining the fortresses which had been built on the northern frontiers of the empire; thence he proceeded to Britain, the greater part of which was now subject to the Roman yoke, but continually disturbed by the incursions of the Caledonians, a warlike people, that inhabited its northern coasts. To protect his British subjects from these incursions, he caused a wall of prodigious length and thickness to be constructed, which extended from the river Eden in Cumberland to the Tyne in Northumberland, a distance of about eighty miles. From Britain, he passed through Gaul to Spain, where he wintered, and, in the mean time, completed some public edifices, which former emperors had left unfinished.

After a transient visit to Rome, Adrian set out for Greece and Asia Minor, all whose provinces he visited in person, leaving behind him not the traces of desolation and carnage, but tokens of royal munificence and national prosperity. To so profound a scholar, the classical city of Athens could not fail to have many attractions; he therefore determined to spend the winter there, and was initiated during that period into the celebrated Eleusinean mysteries. In subsequent journies he traversed his African provinces, and visited Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt, in all of which departments of the empire he devised some public improvements, or meditated some magnificent design. Amongst these, it is affirmed by the Jewish historian, that he projected the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem, but did not live to execute that design.

A complication of diseases with which he was now assailed, induced him to choose a successor; and with this view he first adopted Lucius Commodus, a dissipated and unworthy youth, who, dying soon afterwards, was succeeded by Marcus Antoninus, the excellent prince, whose character will be sketched in the next essay.

In the mean time the diseases of the Emperor increased so rapidly, and became so insupportable, that he desired death with the utmost impatience. "How

wretched," he would frequently exclaim, amidst the paroxysms of pain, "is the man who seeks death, but cannot find it." Often would he earnestly entreat his domestics and attendants to dispatch him, or furnish him with the means of self-destruction. But these were strictly prohibited by his successor, who employed all the arguments, and administered all the consolations which philosophy suggested, to reconcile Adrian to his lot, and induce him to bear his afflictions with greater constancy and patience. At length the moment arrived so ardently desired, in which his mortal sufferings terminated, and it is both interesting and melancholy to learn, what were his reflections in the prospect of dissolution, from his own lips. He expired repeating those celebrated lines,\* addressed to his departing spirit, which have been thus happily translated by one of our own poets :

O fleeting spirit, wandering fire,  
 That long hast warmed my tender breast;  
 Wilt thou no more my frame inspire?  
 No more a pleasing cheerful guest?  
 Whither, ah! whither art thou flying?  
 To what dark, undiscovered shore?  
 Thou seemst all trembling, shivering, dying,  
 And wit and humour are no more!

POPE.

Adrian swayed the imperial sceptre nearly twenty-two years. In the beginning of his reign he followed the example of his predecessor in persecuting the Christians, though not with equal severity; but towards its close, he instructed the governors of the provinces, "not to inflict punishments on persons of this sect, unless they had in other respects violated the laws of Rome."

Tacit. Annal. et Agric. Plin. op. in paneg. et epist. Dio. lib. 68, 69. Aurel. Vict. Eutrop. in Traj. Euseb. Op. &c.

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\* Animula vagula, blandula,  
 Hospes comesque corporis;  
 Quæ nunc abibis in loca?  
 Pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
 Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos.



## REFLECTIONS.

If nothing had been related of the Emperor Nerva, but that he redressed the wrongs of the persecuted sect of Christians, and protected them in the exercise of their religious worship; this alone had been sufficient to prove his political wisdom, no less than his regard to justice and equity. A multitude of facts, which might be collected from ancient and modern history, concur to prove, that no measure can be more impolitic, as well as unjust, than the attempt to impose fetters on conscience, and to interfere in any other way than by moral suasion, with the right of private judgment in religious matters. Such interference has ever proved the fruitful source of civil dissension, and weakened, if not subverted, the governments which resorted to it for protection. It has long been the glory of the British constitution, and has contributed in no small degree to its vigour and perpetuity, that the rights of conscience are recognized, and the unrestrained exercise of those rights protected, by its mild and tolerant laws. So long as this truly Christian spirit shall pervade the counsels, and influence the conduct of those who preside over our heaven-protected empire, it cannot fail to be united and invulnerable; fearless alike of external dangers, and of intestine divisions.

No maxim could be more unexceptionable, if it had been uniformly acted upon, than that by which Trajan professed to regulate his public conduct. It was in reality the law of Christianity, which requires us "to do to all men as we would they should do to us;" a law which, if universally observed, would prevent all the calamities of war, extinguish all the flames of persecution, and produce universal harmony. But how could Trajan reconcile with this golden rule, his invasion and conquest of remote and unoffending tribes, from motives of ambition alone? How could he justify upon this principle his instructions to Pliny, to punish with death, a people, who were stated to be harmless and moral, and against whom no charge could be brought, "except

concerning the law of their God." Justly did the celebrated Christian Apologist Tertullian, animadvert upon this flagrant violation of his own boasted maxim, by saying in his address to that monarch, "If these Christians are guilty, why forbid any search to be made after them—but if innocent, why command them to be punished?" Or how could it be reconciled with this self-evident rule of duty, that the venerable Ignatius should be forced from his beloved flock by the express orders of Trajan, and conveyed from Antioch to Rome, that he might be publicly exhibited in the amphitheatre, at fourscore years of age, and devoured by lions, for the entertainment of the people? Was it possible that the judgment of this otherwise enlightened monarch could be so perverted, and blinded by superstitious prejudices, as to imagine, that, in these instances, he acted towards his subjects as he would have wished his prince to act towards himself, if he had occupied an inferior station?

Thus does it often appear, that the most excellent rules are adopted in theory, but violated in practice. Seldom is it found, that the heart and conduct keep pace with the understanding. On the contrary, nothing is more common than to acknowledge the existence of sacred obligations and moral duties, which are habitually disregarded, and willingly neglected. The accusation brought by an inspired apostle against such characters, still applies to every class of insincere and immoral pretenders to religion. "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." "They know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, yet not only do the same, but take pleasure in them that do them."

The reign of the Emperor Adrian was considered unusually splendid. He filled not his capital alone, but almost every province of his vast empire, with monuments of his greatness. Temples, aqueducts, columns, bridges, and even cities, were built by him in distant parts of the world, which long continued to bear his name. It is probable, that in his progress through his imperial dominions, when these memorials of his power and wealth attracted his eye, many a vain-glorious



thought occurred, like that of Nebuchadnezzar, when walking in his palace, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" But, like the haughty Assyrian monarch, Adrian also was most effectually humbled. While these imaginations were in the king's heart, and many other magnificent projects suggested themselves to his vain and aspiring mind, "there fell a voice from heaven"—the voice of God by his providential dispensations, saying, "O King, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee." Diseases the most intolerable and loathsome quickly reduced this vain-glorious monarch to a condition that called for the commiseration of his meanest subjects, and constrained him to desire with the utmost impatience the moment of release. And when that moment arrived, so long expected, so ardently desired—how full of gloom and melancholy uncertainty did the prospect of immortality appear! with what trembling apprehension did he stand on the fearful verge! Ah! how unlike this impatient and cowardly spirit, which dreaded equally the sufferings of this life, and the darkness of futurity—to the unshaken constancy with which the servants of Christ in that and subsequent ages endured the most excruciating tortures; and the holy ardour with which they rushed forward to grasp the coveted crown of martyrdom! Such will ever be the difference between the subjects of "a hope full of immortality," and those who have "no hope and are without God in the world." In the one case,

The holy triumphs of their soul  
Will death itself outbrave;  
Leave dull mortality behind,  
And fly beyond the grave:

but in the other, how frequently has the melancholy contrast described by the same sacred poet, been realized,—

The timorous mortals start and shrink,  
To cross this narrow sea,  
And linger shivering on the brink,  
Afraid to launch away.

WATTS.

## ESSAY VIII.

*On the Government of the ANTONINES.*

FROM A. D. 139—181.

THE period to which the present essay refers, has been called, and not without reason, the *golden age* of Rome. If Adrian had conferred no other benefit on his country, than that of nominating TITUS ANTONINUS, (surnamed *the Pious*,) and MARCUS AURELIUS, (surnamed *Antoninus Philosophus*,) to succeed him, he would have been entitled to its warmest gratitude. No choice could have been more disinterested in itself, or more beneficial in its results. The former of these princes was a native of Nismes in Gaul, but descended from an illustrious family, several branches of which had held important offices in the state. Antoninus had been brought forward by Adrian many years before the death of that monarch, and entrusted with the highest dignities in the empire. He was fifty years of age, when he came into full possession of the imperial authority, the duties of which had in a great measure devolved on him previously to the decease of the late Emperor. As the excellency of his character was well known, the highest expectations were entertained respecting the wisdom of his future administration; nor were those expectations disappointed. For though few of the events of his reign are now known, and, if they had been minutely preserved, would probably have been far less splendid than those of his predecessor; yet the general character which has been given, both by heathen and christian writers of this excellent prince, abundantly proves that his government was wise, liberal, and enlightened.

His first care was to fill up all offices, domestic and foreign, with men of probity and virtue. Those who had been arbitrary and oppressive, were dismissed, after having been required to restore their ill-gotten gains, and replaced by men, whose integrity had been tried,



and whose talents were approved. Of his private property he was most liberal, ever ready to relieve the necessitous, and reward the deserving; but of the public revenue, he was rigidly economical, avoiding all ostentatious display, and all unnecessary wars, that his subjects might not be burdened with imposts and taxes. Yet if it became necessary to arm for the defence of the Roman provinces, or the suppression of dangerous revolts, he was not backward to employ the energies of the empire, and the abundant resources of his treasury in these enterprises. Thus, at different periods of his prosperous reign, insurrections were quelled in Britain, Germany, and Dacia, with a promptitude and vigour, that had the most salutary influence upon other provinces and tributary states. Awed by the virtues of the monarch, no less than by the vigour of his arms, remote nations solicited his friendship, and referred their most important concerns to his arbitration. Many foreign princes waited upon him in person, and others dispatched ambassadors from distant climes, to do him homage and seek his alliance.

But the measure which reflects the greatest lustre upon the administration of Antoninus, was, the celebrated rescript issued in favour of the Christians; which commanded that “if any of his subjects should disturb persons of this sect, merely on account of their religion, the informer should himself undergo the punishment, which was intended for the accused.” From this decree it is evident that the spirit of persecution continued to rage, though all intolerant laws had been repealed; and that it was necessary to adopt severe measures to repress and subdue it. That such was the prevailing disposition of the times is confirmed by the letters written to Athens, Thessalonica, Larissa, and several other cities of Greece, in favour of this persecuted sect, by Antoninus himself; in consequence of which, the churches had rest through the remaining years of his reign.\*

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\* This favourable impression was probably made upon the Emperor's mind by the memorable apology of Justin Martyr, which was addressed about that time to Antoninus, M. Aurelius, and the senate and people of Rome; and in which that il-

Yet though this prince was so tolerant towards the Christians, he was a devotee of the strictest order to Paganism, and all its idolatrous rites. He personally discharged the duties of the High-Priesthood; an office which all his predecessors had nominally borne, but to the ordinary functions of which they had never attended. Antoninus, however, strictly conformed to all the superstitious ceremonies, which ancient custom had established; and never failed, amidst the pressure of his imperial duties, to fulfil those of a religious nature which devolved upon him, and which he considered as of higher and more sacred obligation. This uniform attention to the rites of a superstitious religion, in addition to his reverence for the memory of his adopted Father, gained him the appellation of *Pious*, by which he is usually distinguished from his successor. After having filled the throne with dignity and honour nearly twenty-three years, this amiable sovereign died of a malignant fever in the 75th year of his age. The motto given with his latest breath to one of his tribunes as a watchword, "*equanimity*," was characteristic both of the system of philosophy he had imbibed, and the general habits of his life. One sentiment which was uttered by him in reply to some who had highly commended the valour of Julius Cæsar and other celebrated warriors, is too excellent to be forgotten. "I had rather," said this pacific and humane emperor, "be the instrument of preserving the life of one of my subjects, than occasion the death of thousands of my enemies."

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS, who had been adopted by Antoninus Pius at Adrian's request, together with Lucius Verus, a prince of a dissolute and unworthy character, ascended the throne at forty years of age, and his colleague at about thirty-three. Then for the first time the Roman empire was governed by two sovereigns,

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lustrious champion of the Christian Faith fully vindicates his brethren from the accusations of their enemies; states and explains the practices of the primitive Christians in their public assemblies; and urges the injustice of condemning them without proof of their guilt.



one of whom has been classed with the most excellent, and the other, the most worthless of princes. Of the latter, it will be sufficient to say, that he continued nine years associated with Aurelius in the government of the empire, the whole of which period was spent in a course of dissipation and excess, that shortened his days, and covered his memory with disgrace. But as his imperial colleague must be contemplated in the double character of a philosopher and prince, and as the experiment has been seldom tried of applying philosophical science to the purposes of administration, it may be interesting and instructive to enter more fully into the character and public conduct of this monarch, than the events of his reign would otherwise justify.

Aurelius had been educated by Adrian with the utmost care and attention, who employed the first scholars of the age to instruct him in every branch of literature. His principal philosophical preceptors were Apollonius Sextus, Junius Rusticus, Claudius Maximus, Cinsia Catullus, and Claudius Severus; his rhetorical teachers were Herodes Atticus and M. Cornelius Fronto; and to Volusius Macianus, the most learned civilian of that day, was committed the important task of preparing him for public life, by instructing him in the laws of that empire, which he was destined to govern. Though his attainments were considerable in every department of literature, philosophy was that in which he most delighted. He made himself thoroughly acquainted with the tenets of all the different sects, but attached himself more particularly to that of the Stoics, whose severe and self-denying habits he early adopted, and continued to practise through life. To so great an extreme did he carry these austerities, that his constitution, though naturally robust and vigorous, was gradually undermined, and his health impaired, before he had arrived at maturity; yet neither bodily infirmity nor mental exhaustion could abate the ardour of his literary pursuit.

In such severe studies, mingled indeed with the engagements of those public stations, which he repeatedly filled with reputation to himself, and benefit to his country, Aurelius was constantly employed during the

reign of Antoninus Pius ; and even after that period, he withdrew as often as circumstances would permit, to his favourite retirement, that he might enjoy the select society of his literary friends. But when called to the administration of an empire which embraced almost the whole world, he felt the necessity of applying himself with diligence to its numerous and weighty concerns ; and of calling to his aid the wisest counsellors and ablest statesmen in his realm. Though a lover of peace, and disposed to make considerable sacrifices for its preservation, the greater part of his reign was tumultuous, and sanguinary. The frontier provinces of the empire were continually harassed by immense numbers of barbarians, who poured their countless myriads into the Roman territories, assailed them on every side, and, when repelled in one quarter, penetrated in another, with augmented numbers and unabated fury. The Parthians, the Catti, the Quadi, the Marcomanni, the Sarmatians, and many other barbarous tribes, whose names are now scarcely known, almost at the same instant, either revolted from under the Roman yoke, or invaded the empire, as if by mutual consent. The most approved generals were sent with detachments to repel the weaker and less formidable of these adversaries ; but Aurelius himself marched at the head of his best legions, to encounter those which excited most alarm. To meet the exigencies of this general war, it became necessary to arm the gladiators, and enlist the slaves belonging to the principal families in Rome ; a measure which had never been resorted to, but during Hannibal's invasion of Italy in the second Punic war. That its expences might not press too heavily upon his subjects, Antoninus imitated the examples of Nerva and Trajan, by publicly selling all his jewels, the vessels of gold and silver, the valuable paintings, and all the costly furniture which his palaces contained, the amount of which, it is said, was sufficient to defray all the charges of the war.

In these enterprises, the Emperor exposed himself, in common with his soldiers, to the greatest dangers and hardships ; the rigours of which his enfeebled constitution could scarcely sustain, though they served to animate the



troops under his command to greater exertions. On several occasions he was in imminent danger of being taken by the enemy, with whose modes of warfare and treacherous artifices, he was not sufficiently acquainted. Yet amidst all these exertions, he seems to have relied more upon superstitious rites and idolatrous sacrifices, than upon the valour of his troops, or even his philosophy itself. Priests of every order, and belonging to each of the deities acknowledged by the Romans, were assembled from all parts, to offer sacrifices, and make expiation for the sins which occasioned these calamities. Amongst other expedients adopted on this occasion for the purpose of propitiating the offended gods of Rome, that of persecuting the Christians, whose numbers had greatly increased in every part of the empire, was one, upon which great reliance was placed. It was imagined by the Emperor and his counsellors that the more these enemies of idolatry were tortured and destroyed, the more certain would be the success of his arms. Every new danger therefore, and every additional instance of revolt, caused the flames of persecution which a blind and bigotted zeal had enkindled, to rage with more destructive violence.

In this fourth general persecution of the Christians, which disgraced the reign of this philosophical Emperor, many eminent disciples of Christ suffered martyrdom; but none more eminent than that celebrated Christian apologist whose name has been already mentioned. Justin Martyr, who had so successfully pleaded the cause of his divine Master and of his persecuted brethren, in the former reign, now took up his pen again to write a second apology, which was also addressed to the Emperor and his ministers of state. But it had no other effect than that of marking him out as a victim more acceptable to the gods, and consequently to be first sacrificed. Noble was the confession made by this illustrious champion when brought before the prefect of the city; such as to astonish and confound his adversaries, but not to shelter him from their malice. He, and many others, who persisted in their refusal to offer sacrifices to idols, were first lacerated by the scourge, and afterwards beheaded in prison. A short time after this event, the

venerable Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was apprehended by the proconsular governor of that city, and after having been urged in vain by threats and promises to abandon the Christian cause, committed to the flames. Nor were these sanguinary proceedings confined to the metropolis, or the eastern provinces of the empire. The desolating flame spread through all its departments, and extended even to the remotest parts of Gaul and Germany, to which the Christians had been driven by former persecutions, and where many whose names are recorded in heaven, though little known on earth, passed from the rack, the gibbet, or the stake, to the possession of their celestial inheritance.

Towards the end of the reign of Aurelius Antoninus, his persecution of the Christians became less severe, which is attributed by some of the ecclesiastical historians to a remarkable deliverance obtained by the prayers of a body of Christians, who were in one of the Emperor's legions. When, on one occasion, his army was reduced to the utmost distress, hemmed in on every side, and cut off from all supply; when despair was written on every countenance, and nothing but groans and lamentations were heard in the Roman camp; these Christians betook themselves to prayer, and while they prayed, rain descended in torrents to slake their thirst; a tremendous storm of thunder and hail terrified and dispersed the fierce invaders; and the Romans obtained a most unexpected but complete victory. This interposition of Providence in answer to prayer, is said to have attracted the attention of the Emperor himself, and induced him to treat the Christians, to whom he was indebted for his success, with less cruelty, though his persecuting edicts were not revoked.

About the same time, Avidius Cassius, a general in whom Aurelius had placed the utmost confidence, and to whom the government of Syria was entrusted, revolted from his sovereign, and caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor by his troops. The military reputation of this general, and his connections by birth, and long-continued residence in Syria, gave him so great an ascendancy in those parts, that it seemed at one time doubtful,



whether he might not ultimately obtain the imperial government; but after having erected the standard of revolt about three months, he was killed by two of his soldiers of subordinate rank. His death was deeply regretted by Aurelius, who hoped to have had the satisfaction of forgiving him, and thus transforming an enemy into a friend. He shewed the utmost kindness to the widow and family of this usurper, and strictly prohibited that any one who was supposed to be implicated in this rebellion, whether of senatorial or inferior rank, should be punished or degraded. The only notice which he publicly took of this transaction was, to decree that in future no governor should preside over the province in which he was born.

The last days of this prince were disturbed by many painful circumstances. The barbarian invaders, though repulsed, were not vanquished—many of the provinces were still in an unsettled state, and evidently inclined to revolt—Carthage, Ephesus, Nicomedia, and Smyrna, were successively laid in ruins by fire or earthquakes—and, to crown all his sorrows, his son Commodus, whom he intended to succeed him in the government, became so openly and grossly depraved, that the Emperor was often heard to express his fears, that the Roman empire itself would scarcely contain his vices. His latest breath however was employed in pressing upon the attention of this unworthy son, those maxims of philosophy and rules of government, by which his own public and private conduct had been regulated—in pointing out the dangers of tyranny, the miseries of vice, and the necessity of surrounding his throne with wise and able counsellors. After a reign of nineteen years, which has been greatly extolled by heathen writers, and which even Christian historians have not severely condemned, this imperial philosopher expired, and was immediately enrolled by his idolatrous subjects among the gods. The “*Meditations*” of Marcus Aurelius, in twelve books, consisting of moral maxims, and rules for the conduct of life, have been preserved and greatly admired.

## REFLECTIONS.

Many valuable hints of instruction are suggested by the preceding facts, suited to every class of character, and every condition in human life. Princes might study with advantage the examples of these monarchs; and especially of the former, in whom there was much to merit the attention and imitation of all succeeding sovereigns. From him, though an heathen emperor, christian potentates might derive lessons of practical wisdom, the results of which would be most honourable to themselves, and beneficial to their subjects. Under the salutary influence of such an example, they would be impressed with the necessity of entrusting the concerns of their empire to none, but men of approved integrity and uprightness; they would be careful to diminish the pressure of public burthens, by a rigid economy, and even by the greatest personal sacrifices; they would avoid engaging in unnecessary wars, which have their origin in an unprincipled ambition, and involve those in calamity and deep distress, whom they are bound to cherish and protect; they would exercise clemency and kindness towards their personal and public enemies; and in a word, they would desire continually to live in the affections of their subjects, rather than extort by terror a reluctant obedience to their authority.

Those too who are placed in private stations, might derive benefit from the contemplation of such an excellent model of heathen morality. The opulent might learn the right use of wealth, which is not intended by the Author of all good for private gratification alone; much less for ostentatious display; but is chiefly designed to enable its possessors, by works of benevolence and mercy, to administer to the wants of the necessitous, and at the same time to gratify the feelings of a compassionate heart. Those who are immersed in business might learn, even from an idolater, that no ordinary occupations, however urgent they may appear, should at any time be allowed to interrupt or prevent the regular discharge of



religious duties; for the most important of the former engagements are but of temporary interest, and cannot therefore admit of a comparison with the higher and more sacred obligations of the divine law. Men of science and erudition may in like manner infer from these bright examples, that wisdom consists not so much in abstruse speculations, as in active usefulness; and that knowledge is most valuable, when rightly applied, and when its influence is exerted for the execution, as well as the discovery of beneficial designs.

The contrast was most striking between the general character of Marcus Aurelius, and his conduct towards his christian subjects. In all other respects he was generous, humane, and compassionate. To his worst enemies he was placable and kind; but to the unoffending followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, he was a most sanguinary persecutor. In other respects he was guided by the example of his revered predecessor, Antoninus Pius, but in this he acted in direct opposition both to the humanity of his own disposition, and the authority of that example. How is this to be accounted for? The impulse of a blind and bigotted zeal will in part explain the cause of these excesses, by which the wisest as well as the most foolish of mankind have frequently been borne along to the commission of crimes, which otherwise they would have despised and hated. But this wild and irregular impulse will scarcely account for nineteen years of deliberate and systematic violence, which resisted all conviction, and triumphed over the feelings of a benevolent mind. The apostle's statement on this subject, and that alone, will fully solve the mystery: "The carnal mind is enmity against God."\*

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\* The Author with much pleasure embraces this opportunity of introducing the pious and excellent remarks of a modern ecclesiastical historian upon the character of Aurelius Antoninus, and the causes of the persecuting spirit he discovered. "I think it impossible," says the judicious Milner, "to solve the phenomenon on any other principles than those by which the enmity of many philosophers of old, and of many devotees and exact moralists of modern times against the Christian religion, is to be explained. The Gospel is not only in its own nature distinct

In Marcus Aurelius we have seen philosophy invested with imperial dignity; but in Justin Martyr, it is presented to our view in a far more interesting relation. That exemplary saint was a *Christian Philosopher*. He was deeply read in all the learning of the age in which he lived, and brought all to bear with effect upon the hallowed cause to which he had devoted his life. An

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from careless and dissolute vice, but also from the whole religion of philosophers, I mean of those who form to themselves a religion from natural and self-devised sources, either in opposition to or with the neglect of the revealed Word of God, and the influence of his Holy Spirit, applying that word to the heart of man. In all ages it will be found that the more strenuously men support such religion, the more vehemently do they hate Christianity. Their religion is pride and self-importance, denies the fallen state of man, the provision and efficacy of grace, and the glory of God and the Redeemer. The enmity hence occasioned is obvious. It must be considered then that Marcus Antoninus was of the Stoical sect, who carried self-sufficiency to the utmost pitch. He fancied that he carried God within him. Like most of the philosophers, he held the doctrine of the *inward deity*, but he held it in all its detestable impiety and arrogance. With him to be good and virtuous was the easiest thing in the world; it was only to follow nature, and to obey the dictates of the deity, man's own soul, which was divine and self-sufficient. He could not with these views be humble, nor pray earnestly, nor feel his own internal wickedness and misery, nor bear the idea of a Saviour and Mediator. Had he contented himself with Pius to be a vulgar person in religion, the humanity of his nature, especially if aided by an equally sound understanding, (but of that I have some doubt,) would probably have led him, like Pius, to have respected the excellent character and virtues of Christians, and he would have felt it his duty to have protected such peaceable and deserving subjects. But the pride of philosophy seems to have been hurt. Whoever has attended to the spirit of his twelve books of Meditations, and duly compared them with the doctrine of the Gospel, must see them to be totally opposite, and will not wonder that Christians felt from a serious Stoic what might have been expected from a flagitious Nero. Pride and licentiousness are equally condemned by the Gospel, and equally seek revenge. If this be a true state of the case, the philosophic spirit, stated as above, however differently modified in different ages, will always be inimical to the Gospel, and the best of moralists will be found in union with the worst of villains on this subject. 'Beware of philosophy,' is a precept which as much calls for our attention now as ever." MILNER'S CHURCH HISTORY, Vol. I. p. 223, 224.



accomplished scholar, as well as a zealous and decided Christian, he seemed to be raised up by the Divine Head of the Church, for the express purpose of combating philosophy with her own weapons; and exhibiting to mankind an example, similar to that of the holy Apostle to the Gentiles, of one, who had been taught to consider the greatest literary attainments, but as loss "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus."

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## ESSAY IX.

*On the Roman Emperors from Commodus to Diocletian.*

FROM A. D. 180—284.

THE century which the present essay is intended to embrace, was a long and dark period, whose history, as far as it is either interesting or instructive, lies in a very narrow compass. Few are the facts that occurred during this corrupt and degenerate age, which are deserving of recollection, or calculated for improvement; and those few, belong rather to ecclesiastical, than to profane history. To attempt a delineation of the characters, or a minute detail of the actions of those adventurers, who were, in rapid succession, elevated and deposed, crowned and assassinated, by a corrupt soldiery, during this period, would be worse than trifling. It would be to display objects, and exhibit scenes, which ought to be covered with perpetual darkness, and especially which cannot be too carefully concealed from the young. Even the names of the greater part of these oppressors of mankind might be consigned to merited oblivion, together with many of those which preceded them; were they not necessary to complete the series of Roman emperors, and essential to an acquaintance with the general history of that empire. No less than twenty of these imperial pageants passed in procession during this century, besides an incredible number of pretenders, usurpers, and

unsuccessful candidates, who aspired to the honours of royalty; but amongst all these, there is one alone on whom it is possible to fix the eye with any degree of interest or pleasure, and on him, but for a very transient season. This prince, whose reign will be more particularly adverted to hereafter, was Alexander Severus, a youth of not more than sixteen years of age, whose heart was too tender, and whose morals were far too pure, for the licentious age in which he lived, and the degenerate people over whom he reigned.

Though the character of **COMMODOUS** was well known, and the fears of his father Aurelius respecting him, had not been concealed, he found no difficulty in obtaining his election to the crown. His public administration was most contemptible; his private conduct, flagitious in the extreme; his whole reign, turbulent and disgraceful. One public act alone of this profligate monarch deserves commendation, and that, because of its beneficial influence, rather than the motive from which it sprang. He favoured and protected his Christian subjects, who continued to enjoy rest and prosperity through the whole of his reign. But, for this respite from the horrors of persecution, they were indebted, not to the humanity of the Emperor, and much less to his regard for their holy religion; but it seems he had a favourite mistress, whose father had been healed by a Christian physician, and who had cherished, on that account, a predilection for persons of that sect. This same concubine afterwards discovered, that her name was inserted amongst many others in the Emperor's private list of those who were intended for execution, and effectually prevented the accomplishment of his design, by administering poison to her imperial lover. He died in the thirty-first year of his age, and thirteenth of his reign.

**HELVIVS PERTINAX**, a soldier of obscure birth and severe habits, was chosen by the prætorian cohorts to succeed him, (A. D. 192;) but almost as soon as he had been elected, either offended by his attempts to restrain their licentiousness, or by his withholding from them the promised largess, they entered his palace in a tumultuous manner, and murdered him within three months after.



they had given him the crown. Rendered insolent by the success of their crimes, they now publicly offered the empire for sale to the highest bidder; this proved to be **DIDIUS JULIANUS**, at that time the wealthiest citizen of Rome; who stipulated to pay for his imperial honours a sum nearly equal to a million sterling. When the disgraceful bargain was made, the new Emperor arrogantly entered the Senate-house, and demanded the ratification of the treaty from the legislative body, who were too dependant upon the prætorian soldiers to withhold their assent. At the same time, **Niger** was proclaimed Emperor in Syria, **Albinus** in Britain, and **Severus** in Illyria. The latter of these candidates proved ultimately successful. His armies bore down all opposition, and placed him at length (A. D. 195) without a rival on the throne. The administration of **SEVERUS** was vigorous, but despotic. It corresponded with his name; for it was characterized throughout by great severity, though not by wanton cruelty. After having subdued the Parthians and Persians, who had availed themselves of the late disturbances to revolt; he undertook a British expedition, fully determined to complete the subjugation of that island. In this enterprise he suffered many hardships, and was exposed to great dangers; his best legions were frequently repulsed by the undisciplined valour of the Caledonians; but at length he drove them to their native wilds, and constructed an immense wall, which still bears his name, and which, extending from the western to the eastern sea, formed a complete boundary to his British dominions. He died at York in the sixty-sixth year of his life, and eighteenth of his reign. Just before his death he called for the urn, which was to contain his ashes, and taking it in his hands, exclaimed, "Thou little urn, soon shalt thou contain all that will remain of one, whom the whole world could not contain." This monarch persecuted with great severity both Christians and Jews; many of whom perished during his rigorous administration in every part of the empire.

**CARACALLA** and **GETA**, the two sons of **Severus**, were left by their father (A. D. 211) in the joint administration

of the empire ; but were no sooner chosen Emperors by the army, than jealousies and disagreements arose, which their mother in vain attempted to remove. These two princes were as opposite in disposition as Titus and Domitian had been—Caracalla, the most savage and cruel of monsters, that has ever appeared in human form—and Geta, remarkable for mildness and amiableness of temper. The former of these sovereigns quickly manifested the ferocity of his nature, by murdering his brother Geta in his mother's arms. This atrocious crime was followed by a tremendous series of cruelties and murders, which filled the empire with blood, during six tedious years, when his horrible career was closed by assassination, in the thirtieth year of his age. The person who had secretly planned the murder of Caracalla, was the individual fixed upon by the soldiers to succeed him. His name was MACRINUS, who associated his son Diadumenus with himself in the administration of the empire. The short reign of these Emperors was remarkable for nothing but an indiscriminate severity, which irritated, without reforming the licentious troops, by whose favour they had been raised from obscurity. In the expectation of meeting with greater indulgence from a young and profligate prince, than from so rigorous a disciplinarian as Macrinus, the legions quickly deserted, and raised to that imperial dignity a boy fourteen years of age, who is supposed to have been a son of Caracalla, by one of his concubines. Of this effeminate and most depraved sovereign, whose proper name was Bassianus, but who is better known by his assumed title of HELIOGABALUS, or *Priest of the Sun*, nothing more need be said than that, after a most prodigal, debauched, and impious reign of four years, during which he married and divorced six wives, and committed the most horrible crimes, he was murdered by a party of mutinous soldiers, in the eighteenth year of his age. He was succeeded by Alexander, the youth whose name has been already mentioned, as forming the only exception in a series of tyrants and despots, which extended from the age of the Antonines to that of Constantine.

ALEXANDER, according to some historians, was six-



teen, and, according to others, but fourteen years of age, when he ascended the throne, (A. D. 222,) which he continued to fill about thirteen years with great honour to himself, and benefit to his country. The excellence both of his character and reign is attributed in part to the influence of his mother Mammæa, a woman no less eminent for her virtues, than for her numerous accomplishments. This excellent lady is styled by a Christian writer, a very pious and religious woman; by some, she is supposed to have embraced the Christian religion; but it is at least certain, that she was well acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity, in which she was instructed by Origen, who flourished at that time. Nor was her son Alexander ignorant of the Christian scriptures, as is evident from his quoting on almost every occasion, and inscribing upon the walls of his palace, the evangelical precept: "Do to others, as ye would they should do to you;" but instead of being a Christian indeed, he profanely mingled christian with pagan rites, and placed the image of Christ in an idol's temple, amongst those of Jupiter, Venus, and other heathen deities.

The object at which this prince incessantly aimed, when not engaged in foreign expeditions, was, the reformation of public manners, and the removal of those abuses which his guilty predecessors had introduced and sanctioned. The governors of the provinces and ministers of state, who had been appointed to office by Heliogabalus, and many of whom were scarcely inferior to their patron in prodigality and vice, were all dismissed, and reduced to private stations. Such as were convicted of bribery and corruption, were punished; and persons of acknowledged talent and tried integrity, alone were entrusted with the execution of the laws. The Senate, which had been greatly degraded by the usurped authority of the soldiers, and still more by its own vices, was first purified by the exclusion of its most unworthy members, and afterwards reinstated in its former honours. It was the constant care of this Emperor to reward every species of merit, for which purpose he regularly inserted in a book the names of those who had

rendered any service to their country, that they might receive a just remuneration in proportion to the nature and extent of their deserts.

During the reign of this prince, Artaxerxes, king of Persia, made a vigorous effort to recover those provinces which in former ages had belonged to the Persian empire, but which had been long subject to the Roman yoke. Alexander collected a numerous army, and marched to encounter the Persian forces under Artaxerxes, whom he completely routed, and returned in triumph to his capital. His next expedition was against the Parthians, who had recently revolted; in this contest his arms were crowned with as signal success as in the former. The last foreign enterprise in which he embarked was against the northern tribes, who continually poured their unnumbered myriads into the provinces of Upper and Lower Germany. These were vigorously repulsed by Alexander in person; but in the midst of his successes, this excellent young prince and his mother, who constantly attended him, were murdered in their tent by a band of mutineers, which had been trained to habits of licentiousness and profligacy under the late Emperor.

The crown was next given to MAXIMIN, (A. D. 235,) a Thracian soldier of obscure birth, who had risen to distinction in the Roman army by his personal prowess alone. He was of gigantic stature, and prodigious strength, which rendered him both before and after his elevation, a terror to all who approached him. His reign was remarkable for cruelty, in which he surpassed even the most savage and inhuman of his predecessors. It was also disgraced by the sixth general persecution of the Christians, which was principally directed against the pastors or bishops of the Churches, many of whom now suffered martyrdom. The Senate steadily refused their assent to his election, which so greatly enraged this furious despot, that he hastened with his troops to deluge the capital with blood; when his attention was diverted by an insurrection in Africa, where the elder and younger Gordian had been proclaimed Emperors. These unhappy candidates for im-



perial honours were soon killed by one of Maximin's generals, and now the Senate and people of Rome were expecting nothing but destruction; when, to their inexpressible joy, they heard that this inhuman monster had been killed by his own guard, as he was sleeping in his tent. This happy event took place after an usurpation of about three years, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. PAPIENUS and BALBINUS had been chosen Emperors by the Senate previously to Maximin's death, who were no sooner delivered from their fears of the common tyrant, than they began to dispute between themselves, each one claiming the pre-eminence. Whilst this impolitic and disgraceful controversy was pending, both parties were attacked and destroyed by the prætorian soldiers, who again availed themselves of the unsettled state of the empire, to exercise their assumed right of placing a sovereign upon the throne.

GORDIAN, a grandson of the elder Gordian, who had been killed in Africa, was accidentally met by these soldiers, after they had perpetrated the murder of the two late Emperors, and immediately proclaimed in their stead. His reign was short and devoid of interest; he was a man of some learning, and compared with most of his predecessors in the government, of virtuous habits; but too inexperienced and feeble to make an effectual stand against domestic corruptions and foreign invaders. He is supposed to have been poisoned by Philip, an Arabian, after having occupied the throne about six years, in the twenty-second year of his age. PHILIP, the supposed murderer of Gordian, succeeded him, A. D. 243. His government of the empire is characterized by nothing but a splendid celebration of the *secular games*, on account of a thousand years having revolved since the building of the city; and by the continual incursions of the Goths, who were successfully opposed by Decius his lieutenant, an ambitious general, who was so flushed with his success, as to cause himself immediately to be proclaimed Emperor. The army espoused his cause; Philip was dethroned and killed in the fifth year of his reign, and DECIUS, on his arrival at Rome, was acknowledged by the Senate. This was a martial and

energetic reign, entirely occupied with efforts to repel the Goths, and other numerous tribes of invaders, who assailed the empire in every quarter, and committed dreadful ravages. But it was still more dishonoured by the most sanguinary persecution of the Christians, with which they had ever been visited. This is called by ecclesiastical historians, the seventh general persecution; in which the most horrible tortures were invented; and barbarities, that almost exceed credibility, were practised. It appears to have been the determination of Decius, to exterminate the whole body of Christians, and leave no trace of a sect against which he had imbibed an inveterate enmity. But his career was suddenly terminated by an unsuccessful engagement with the Goths, to escape from whose hands he plunged into a morass, in which he was so completely ingulphed, that his body could never be found. His reign did not exceed two years and six months.

GALLUS, who had treacherously betrayed his imperial master, and occasioned the death of many thousands of his countrymen, after having concluded a most dishonourable peace with the fierce invaders, to whom the Romans agreed to pay an annual tribute, was rewarded for his services by being made Emperor. After little more than two years he was killed in battle, and succeeded by VALERIAN, (A. D. 259,) in whose reign the eighth general persecution of the Christians took place. The end of this persecutor was remarkable; for, being taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia, that haughty monarch made the Roman emperor his footstool, whenever he mounted his horse; and, after seven years of degradation and insult, plucked out his eyes, and flead him alive. The captivity of Valerian occasioned the elevation of his son GALLIENUS, who, instead of taking measures to obtain his father's release, gave himself up to dissipation and sensuality. At the same time, in different parts of the Roman empire, there were no less than thirty adventurers, who aspired to the crown. These pretenders, who are commonly known by the appellation of the *thirty tyrants*, supported their claims by force of arms for a short time, but soon returned



to the obscurity whence they arose. Gallienus having been killed by his own soldiers when engaged in the siege of Milan, was succeeded by CLAUDIUS, (A. D. 268,) whose reign was chiefly occupied with repelling the attacks of the Gothic invaders, who now made it their annual custom to invade the Roman empire with immense armies. Whilst engaged in one of these enterprises, he was seized with a malignant fever in Pannonia, which terminated a reign of little more than two years. AURELIAN was next chosen by the army, on account of his military talents. He is celebrated for having killed more than nine hundred enemies at different times with his own hand, and also as the conqueror of Zenobia, a royal heroine, who long withstood the Roman arms, but was at length taken prisoner, and graced the triumph of Aurelian. Her secretary, the celebrated Longinus, was cruelly put to death by order of the Roman emperor. It is remarkable, that this cruel warrior was meditating a revival of the persecuting edicts against the Christians, and actually employed in issuing orders to that effect, when he was deterred from the execution of this cruel purpose by a thunderbolt, which entered the imperial tent, and fell at the feet of the monarch. His cruelties led to a conspiracy amongst his principal officers, several of whom he had marked for destruction, by whom he was assassinated, (A. D. 275,) after having reigned five years.

The aged Emperor TACITUS stands next in the list of those who swayed the imperial sceptre at Rome. He was no less than seventy-five years of age, when he was induced by the urgent entreaties of the Senate to charge himself with the administration. His measures were so wise, his habits so temperate, and his disposition so amiable, that his death, which took place within six months of his accession to the throne, was universally and deeply regretted. PROBUS was next chosen on account of his name, as it was agreed by all that *probity* was most desirable in an Emperor. His reign was vigorous; his military talents commanded the respect of the enemies of the state, and his moderation, that of his own subjects. Yet he was continually em-

ployed in suppressing rebellions, and encountering pretenders to the crown. He was slain by some of his soldiers, whom he had offended by employing them in draining a fen; thus terminating an active and tumultuous reign of six years and four months. The following Emperor CARUS associated his two sons Carinus and Numerian with himself in the government of the empire. His reign, and that of his two sons, were short, and wholly destitute of interest. Carus was killed by lightning in his tent; Numerian was assassinated by his father-in-law Aper, who aspired to the crown; but was defeated in his expectations by the intrepidity of Diocletian, who slew the murderer, and afterwards ascended the throne with the concurrent approbation of the army and senate. Carinus, likewise, the only remaining son of Carus, who had rendered himself odious by his vices, was soon afterwards defeated and killed, leaving to Diocletian the undisputed sovereignty of an unwieldy and tottering empire.

Dio. Cass. lib. 73. ad fin. Ammian. Marcell. Aurel. Vict. Eutrop. Hesiod. Euseb. et Zosim. Oper.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The cursory view which has been taken of the state of the Roman empire, and character of its sovereigns, during a long series of years, fully justifies and corroborates the declaration of an inspired writer, who has affirmed, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The holy Apostle, who has borne this affecting testimony to the doctrine of human depravity, lived at no remote period from that to which the present essay refers. He was not ignorant of the state of society and manners throughout the Roman empire, in part of which he lived and laboured to a very advanced age; and it is not improbable that, in the passage which has been cited, he had a more particular reference to the moral condition of that empire, which then embraced almost the whole



world. If the manners of the great have a powerful, an irresistible influence upon the subordinate classes of society—if the character of princes and statesmen forms an index by which to discover, with any degree of accuracy, the national character of the people over whom they rule—or if the diseased state of the head and heart may be supposed to affect the whole constitution of the social body—may it not be inferred, that never was there a people more deeply depraved, or a state of society more vitiated and impure than that of the Romans at this period? But is the dreadful preponderance of vice over virtue, to be accounted the distinguishing feature of that corrupt age, or is it not characteristic of our fallen nature in every age, and amongst all nations? There may indeed be a variety of moral checks and counteracting circumstances, which prevent the vicious principles of the human heart from attaining so rank a growth; the progress of knowledge, and especially of Christian knowledge, may constrain iniquity to hide her head; but the seeds of the same depravity remain, and will continue to spring up, and bring forth the fruits of death, till they shall be finally eradicated by the cordial and universal reception of the Gospel.

It is evident not only from the preceding facts, but from the records of all past ages, that the dignities of this world are not usually allotted by the Ruler of nations to his children, but that they are, for the most part, the portion of his enemies. He, by whose permission kings reign—the righteous Arbiter, “who putteth down one, and setteth up another,”—frequently dispenses these fading honours and dangerous distinctions to the vilest, the most infamous of characters; but blessings more durable in their nature, and of far greater value, are reserved for the objects of his affection. Their’s is an heavenly inheritance, an unfading crown, an imperishable and eternal portion. They may say with truth to the most prosperous and elevated of the ungodly, as Jesus once said to his disciples, “I have meat to eat, which ye know not of.” How foolish then, and how ignorant are they, who envy the prosperity of the wicked; and who,

when they observe the enemies of God "in great power, spreading themselves like a green bay-tree," forget that "they are set in slippery places, that they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb; that they are brought into desolation as in a moment!"

But besides such general reflections, arising from the whole of the preceding narrative, there are others suggested by some of the facts which have been stated, when separately considered. The favour shown by Commodus to his Christian subjects, at the suggestion and through the influence of a favourite mistress, proves, that the Most High can and frequently does over-rule the crimes of men, so as to make even the worst of characters, instruments of good to mankind, and means of accomplishing his own gracious purposes; and when this end is answered, they are cast aside as useless, or made the instruments of mutual destruction. The address of Severus to the urn which was to contain his ashes, trifling as it may at first sight appear, becomes important, when considered as an affecting example of that total neglect with which the incorruptible part of our nature is treated by many who profess to believe in the immortality of the soul. "Soon shalt thou contain," said this heathen Emperor, "all that remains of Severus." Did he not then know that he had a soul, which no funeral urn could enclose, no sepulchral walls immure, and over which death itself could have no power? If he did, (and even the heathens were not ignorant of this fact,) was it possible, that in his last moments he could be wholly indifferent to the future, the eternal condition of this imperishable part of himself? Yet thus it is—myriads, who profess to have no doubt of the immortality of the soul, devote all their attention to a corruptible body, and spend the whole of life in solicitously inquiring, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The boundless scenery that stretches before them, engages no part of their attention; nor does the destiny that awaits them hereafter, occupy a moment's serious consideration!

The character of Alexander resembles in many respects that of Josiah, king of Judah. Like that young and



amiable monarch, he aimed at reforming public abuses, and restraining the vices of a degenerate age. His short but interesting reign may fitly be compared to the transient appearance of a star, suddenly emerging from behind the clouds, which overspread the hemisphere in a dark and tempestuous night. How far the light which he reflected, was borrowed from the sun of Christian revelation, it is now not easy to determine; nor can it be ascertained, whether this prince and the maternal guide of his youth were sincerely attached to Christianity. That they were acquainted with its doctrines—that they admired its precepts—and professed to regulate their public and private conduct by them, is most certain; and may we not hope that, amidst much remaining darkness, and a degree of worldly conformity which would be without excuse in a more enlightened age, there was some portion of spiritual knowledge. Without presuming, however, to pronounce on their condition, their conduct gives occasion to remark, that there are many who are speculatively acquainted with Christianity; who assent to its doctrines, and profess to admire its precepts; who yet refuse to part with their idols; who place the image of Mammon with that of Christ in the temple of their hearts; and who are either ashamed or afraid to confess him before men, by openly espousing his sacred cause.

Finally, the miserable ends of many persecutors (of which several instances, and especially those of Decius and Valerian, have been related in the preceding pages) afford awful demonstration of the folly and danger of every attempt to obstruct the progress of Messiah's kingdom. For though "the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing—though the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against JEHOVAH and against his ANOINTED; he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh—JEHOVAH shall have them in derision—He will break them with a rod of iron, he will dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel."

## ESSAY X.

*On the Reigns of* **DIOCLETIAN** *and* **CONSTANTINE.**

FROM A. D. 284—337.

A VARIETY of circumstances had long indicated the approaching dissolution of the Roman empire. Enfeebled by internal divisions arising from the contending claims of numerous usurpers; and continually harassed by the incursions of foreign invaders, it was not difficult to perceive, that a kingdom thus divided against itself could not stand, unless its existence were protected by some new and more vigorous mode of administration. It was necessary that some enterprising monarch, possessed of commanding talents and influence, should sway the imperial sceptre, who would be able to curb the licentiousness of the Roman legions, no less than to repel the attacks of foreign adversaries. Such was Diocletian, whose reign forms a new æra in Roman History, on account of the system of policy and new form of government, which he was induced, by the necessity of the times, rather than from choice, to adopt.

DIOCLETIAN, who is supposed to have been the son of a slave, had risen by his merits alone, from the lowest station to the most honourable and important post in the Roman empire. It has been already stated, that after the death of Carus, and two of his sons, this general was invested by the army which he commanded, with the imperial purple. A feeble resistance was made to his election by Carinus, the only surviving son of Carus, who was soon killed by one of his own tribunes, and left his competitor in full possession of the government. The discerning mind of Diocletian immediately perceived the necessity of associating with himself in the administration of so unwieldy and disturbed an empire some persons in whom he could repose confidence. He therefore first appointed Maximian, one of the ablest of his generals,



his imperial colleague ; to whom was committed the administration of the western branch of the empire, including Italy, Spain, Gaul, Germany, and Britain; whilst he himself determined to fix his residence at Nicomedia, and govern the eastern provinces. But it soon became evident that the exigencies of the state required the continual maintenance of four standing armies in remote provinces, and it was apprehended that their generals would, if private individuals, aspire to the government of the empire ; it was therefore determined to invest two younger officers with the title of *Cæsar*, and the ensigns of royalty ; to whom the Emperors should give their daughters in marriage, and who should be appointed to succeed them in the government. For this purpose Diocletian fixed upon Galerius, and Maximian upon Constantius ; so that in reality there were now four sovereigns, amongst whom the administration of the empire was divided. Two of these, Maximian and Galerius, were sanguinary despots, whose whole reign was a series of barbarous and oppressive crimes ; Diocletian was scarcely less cruel in his disposition, but covered his cruelties for a time with a veil of policy, and an apparent regard to justice ; Constantius alone was a mild and humane prince, who sought the happiness, and was rewarded with the affections of his subjects.

Each of these sovereigns was fully employed in military expeditions during several years. Constantius was opposed to the Franks, who had invaded Gaul, and to Carausius, who had revolted, and was made Emperor by the Britons ; Galerius maintained an arduous, and at first unsuccessful struggle with the Persians ; Maximian passed over into Africa to quell a formidable insurrection in that country ; and Diocletian reserved for himself the invasion of Egypt, where Achilleus, a Roman general, had rebelled, and caused himself, according to the usual custom of those times, to be proclaimed Emperor. After a succession of defeats and victories, which it would be tedious to detail, all these enterprises were successfully terminated, and the four sovereigns enjoyed the triumph, which their valour was supposed to have merited. The reception, however, which the Emperors met with in

their ancient capital, was not such as to induce them to make it their residence; Diocletian returned immediately after his triumph to Nicomedia, and Maximian to Milan, the seat of their respective governments.

Peace being now established in almost every part of the Roman empire, the associated sovereigns directed their attention to the regulation of its internal affairs. It appears from ecclesiastical history, that Christianity, though it no longer retained its primitive simplicity, had increased so rapidly during the late wars, and was so generally professed, that fears were entertained for the very existence of Paganism. The reigning princes, and especially the sanguinary Galerius, saw with mingled rage and apprehension the progress of this hated sect, and all, except Constantius, entered into a conspiracy to exterminate it from the earth. A persecution commenced under Diocletian, and continued more than ten years, which far exceeded every former persecution in savage cruelty, and satanic rage. It would be most painful to describe the various tortures inflicted upon myriads of the disciples of Christ by these inhuman tyrants: suffice it to say, that their temples were levelled with the ground; all the copies of the Holy Scriptures, which could be found were publicly burnt; and every kind of suffering, which human ingenuity could devise, was exhausted in vain endeavours to transform the worshippers of the one living and true God, into idolaters and pagans. At length the persecutors imagined that their work was achieved; so scattered and concealed were the remaining adherents to Christianity, and so numerous the victims which had been immolated on the altar of superstition, that they arrogantly boasted in their public inscriptions, and coins, (some of which are still extant,) that "they had effaced the name and superstition of the *Christians*, and had restored the worship of the gods."

Whilst this tremendous persecution still raged, a resolution was taken by Diocletian, for which it is not easy to account, namely, to lay aside his imperial honours, and retire into a private station; and on the same day his colleague, according to a previous agreement, imi-



tated his example. Maximian did this, as it afterwards appeared, by constraint, and in a few years made an unsuccessful attempt to recover his former dignity; but Diocletian lived in contented obscurity, cultivating his garden and orchard, till a delirium which has been ascribed by some to the influence of poison terminated his life, after a reign of more than twenty years, and a seclusion from the world of almost ten. ✕

CONSTANTIUS and GALERIUS, having become Emperors in consequence of the abdication of their predecessors, the latter chose two Cæsars without the concurrence of his colleague. These were *Severus* and *Maximin*, who partook of the ferocity of the tyrant to whom they were indebted for their promotion. Constantius did not long enjoy his imperial honours; for in the second year of his reign he died at York, in the arms of his son Constantine, who had with difficulty effected his escape from the court of Galerius, and arrived but a little before his father's death. That amiable sovereign expressed in his last moments his desire that none should succeed him but his son Constantine, whose filial affection, both to himself and his mother Helena, had been most exemplary. Constantius had steadily opposed himself to the persecuting spirit of the times, and in reply to some courtiers, who urged him to dismiss from his service those who would not abandon the profession of Christianity, remarked that "it could not be expected of those who had forsaken their God, that they would prove faithful to their prince." He is said to have expressly recommended the Christians to the protection of Constantine, with his expiring breath. His death took place in the fifty-sixth year of his age, sixteen years after he had been created Cæsar, and two after he had attained to the imperial dignity.

The early part of Constantine's reign was fully occupied with exertions to maintain possession of the crown which had been bequeathed to him by his father, in opposition to the claims of those who were either brought forward by Galerius, or had assumed to themselves the honours of royalty. Of the former were *Severus*, *Maximin*, and *Licinius*; and of the latter, the only formidable competitor was *Maxentius*, a person of obscure birth, of

a cruel disposition, and of grossly immoral habits. This usurper obtained possession of Rome, where he committed innumerable outrages and crimes during six years, but was at last defeated and slain by Constantine in a general engagement, which took place near the walls of the metropolis. This battle is rendered memorable by the supposed conversion of Constantine to the Christian faith. The statement of this remarkable occurrence, which has been made by Eusebius, a contemporary historian, (who affirms that he received it from the Emperor himself,) is to the following effect. As Constantine was marching at the head of his army into Italy to encounter Maxentius, full of solicitude about the issue of the contest, he retired to implore the protection of the God of the Christians. Scarcely were these private devotions ended, when he observed in the heavens a splendid appearance, which resembled a cross, with this inscription in Greek characters, "Conquer by this." All the augurs and pagan priests attached to his camp agreed to pronounce it an inauspicious omen, and were greatly terrified by it, but on the mind of Constantine himself it produced a far different impression. He was led by it to solicit the instruction of several Christian pastors, who explained to him more fully the doctrines and evidences of their religion, by which he professed to be so fully convinced, that from that time he renounced the worship of idols, and avowed himself a Christian. A banner was henceforward displayed in his army, emblazoned with an emblem and inscription similar to that which had led to this important change in his sentiments. On entering the city of Rome after the defeat and death of Maxentius, he rejected all the homage and applause of the multitude, pointing them to this standard, as representing that by which alone he had obtained the victory. When his own statue was afterwards erected in the capital, he caused an emblematical representation of the cross to be introduced with this inscription, "By this victorious cross, Constantine has delivered Rome from tyranny, and restored to the Senate and people their ancient glory."

From this time the Emperor's principal object seemed to be, to surround the religion which he had embraced



with all possible splendour. The unadorned Christian temples which had been so lately demolished, were now rebuilt in the most magnificent style, and richly endowed; many new ones were erected in all the principal cities of the empire, and highly ornamented with decorations not inferior to those which had long embellished the pagan temples. The pastors and presbyters of the Christian churches were now invested with more extensive authority, and laden with wealth and worldly honours.—Synods were convened, at which the Emperor presided in person, for the purpose of authoritatively declaring what is the holy Catholic faith, and suppressing all those heresies which had crept into the church. Under the dominant influence of Athanasius, several who had embraced the Arian heresy, (including Arius himself,) were banished; but in a few years, some of this excommunicated party, in their turn, gained the ascendancy, and obtained the expulsion of the most distinguished Athanasians. In the mean time, the Emperor commanded the pagan temples throughout his empire to be shut; prohibited the offering of sacrifices to idols, and used his influence with other princes, (and especially with Sapor, king of Persia,) to obtain a complete toleration of Christians within their dominions. He also caused copies of the Holy Scriptures to be multiplied, in place of those which his tyrannical predecessors had destroyed; and in addition to the rites which the Apostles had ordained, he proceeded to institute a great variety of fasts and festivals in honour of the apostles and martyrs, whose bones were now collected from all quarters with religious care, and buried with little less than imperial pomp. To his reign is ascribed by Catholic writers, the discovery, not only of the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, but also of a portion of the true cross, on which the Saviour suffered! But without descending to the legendary fictions of papal superstition, it is certain that a sumptuous edifice was founded by Constantine at Jerusalem, in honour of the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, on the spot which the Empress Helena supposed to have been its original site.

But though this first Christian Emperor paid a prin-

cipal attention to ecclesiastical affairs, he did not neglect his secular interests. He first conquered Maximin, who succeeded Galerius as Emperor of the East; and after him Licinius, whose authority he had once acknowledged, but whom afterwards he resolved to depose; and having thus removed every rival, reigned sole Monarch of the Roman empire. And now he found leisure to execute a design that had long been meditated, namely, the removal of the seat of government from Rome, and the construction of a new capital in a more central part of the empire. The place upon which he fixed for this purpose, was then called Byzantium, but since, in honour of this Emperor, Constantinople. Many reasons have been assigned for this undertaking: some have attributed it to the hostility shewn by the pagan inhabitants of Rome to the establishment of Christian worship, and the suppression of their superstitious rites; others have supposed that Constantine could not endure to dwell in a city, whose streets had so often been stained with the blood of the martyrs; whilst others have ascribed it solely to political motives, and especially to an expectation that the continual irruptions of the northern and eastern tribes of barbarians might thus be more effectually prevented. But from whatever motive it might arise, the measure proved to be most injudicious, and unquestionably accelerated the final destruction of the empire. —

No labour or expence was spared in the execution of this favourite project. A wall of great height and thickness, which extended from sea to sea, enclosed the area within which the city was to be built. This space was filled up by a spacious capitol, an immense amphitheatre, a superb senate-house, many magnificent structures devoted to civil and religious uses, and numerous splendid mansions intended for the residence of senators and others connected with the administration of the empire. After the work was completed, a day was set apart in which the new metropolis was consecrated, by numerous religious rites, to the God of martyrs, or, according to the testimony of some ancient writers, to the Virgin Mary. This event, which in reality terminates the history of



Rome as an imperial residence, and quickly reduced the metropolis of the world to a state of dependence and poverty, took place 1128 years after the city had been founded by Romulus, and in the three hundred and thirtieth of the Christian æra.

With the removal of the imperial court to Constantinople this series of history might naturally be expected to close; for all beyond this period, besides its comparatively uninteresting character, belongs more properly to the history of Constantinople, than to that of Rome. But a prospective glance at the subsequent events of Constantine's reign, and the unhappy consequences of this transfer of government, may not be wholly unacceptable, before we take a final leave of proud imperial Rome, and her degenerate sons.

It is painful to be under the necessity of stating that the latter years of Constantine were characterized by a series of arbitrary and oppressive measures. The most credible witnesses have attested, that he put to death the Empress Fausta his wife, Crispus one of his sons, and Licinius his nephew, besides many distinguished senators, on the slightest suspicion. Though the most extravagant terms were employed by his flatterers, both before and after his decease, to describe his exemplary piety, and Christian zeal, there is too much reason to conclude that with him Christianity was rather a matter of state-policy, than an operative principle—that his opinions were continually vacillating—and that his conduct was in many instances grossly inconsistent with his profession. He did not submit to Christian baptism, till he became hopeless of recovery from the disease of which he died, in the thirty-second year of his reign.

The succeeding emperors, who reigned both before and after the division of the Roman empire into an eastern and western monarchy, were continually harassed by the incursions of the Goths, Visigoths, Huns, Vandals, Allanes, and many other tribes, who frequently ravaged their territories, and levied contributions on their subjects. Often were these princes reduced to the disgraceful necessity of purchasing a cessation of hostilities by sacrificing their treasures of gold and silver; or by ceding

large portions of their dominions. In the year 410 Rome was taken and plundered by Alaric, king of the Visigoths, in revenge for the violation of a treaty, by which the Emperor Honorius, or his ministers, had stipulated to pay to that celebrated Gothic chief four thousand pounds weight of gold. The Vandals, under Genseric, ravaged Africa and Spain; whilst the eastern empire was dismembered, and almost annihilated by the furious Attila, who poured an army of not less than five hundred thousand Huns into Asia and Greece. At length, in the year 476 of the Christian æra, and about 1224 years from the building of the city, the western empire, of which Rome was the capital, was finally subverted by Odoacer, prince of the Heruli, who conquered Italy, took possession of Rome, obliged Augustulus, the last of the emperors, to resign his throne, and continued to reign in his stead, till he in his turn, was expelled by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths. Thus fell, after many years of decay, a political fabric, once the most stupendous and magnificent which the world had ever seen, undermined by its own vices, rather than demolished by the hands of its enemies. The subversion of this gigantic empire must be ascribed to the voluptuousness of its princes, and the enervating influence of their example upon their subjects, rather than to the torrent of barbarians by which it was finally inundated.

Eutrop. Aurel. Vict. Zosim. Lactant. Ammian. Marcell.  
et Euseb. Oper.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

So true is it that whilst "righteousness exalteth a nation, sin is a reproach to any people." Who can contemplate the humbled and degraded state of this once flourishing empire when it became the prey of every invader, and trembled at the touch of even the feeblest of its adversaries, without perceiving the truth and justice of this sentiment. But it is not inscribed alone on the



ruins of the Roman empire; it may be traced in every page of the history of mankind. What has demolished the fairest, the noblest, the most magnificent structure, which the Omnipotent Creator has formed in this inferior world? What has trodden in the dust, the primæval glory and beauty of man, who was created in the image of God, and once reflected all the moral attributes of the divine nature? Is it not sin that has committed these fearful ravages amongst the works of God—that has occasioned so hideous a transformation of the loveliest, into the most deformed and loathsome of objects—that has broken down all the barriers of primitive innocence, and given easy access to those “spiritual wickednesses in high places,” who incessantly aim at the destruction of our apostate race? The final consequences of transgression may be long suspended; threatened vengeance may be delayed from year to year—from age to age; the moral decay may not be perceived, and even mistaken for increasing splendour and power—but, as in the instance of national decay and ruin, which has been just contemplated, the issue, though disregarded, is certain—the destruction of the wicked will be as inevitable and fearful, as it is, in many cases, sudden and unexpected. “When they are saying, peace and safety, sudden destruction will come upon them.”

How ineffectual were the attempts of Diocletian and his guilty associates to exterminate the Christian religion, and blot out the light of Divine Revelation! How false and presumptuous their boast, that this work of destruction was achieved, and that the Christian churches were as completely demolished, as the temples in which they had been accustomed to assemble! Soon did it appear, that not even the least portion of the sacred volume had been lost, but that a special Providence had watched over that inestimable treasure, and preserved it from the destructive fury of the oppressors. It soon became evident that the havoc made in the Church of Christ, so far from rasing it to its foundations, had tended greatly to the furtherance of the gospel. In a very few years, this exterminated sect filled the land; and the visible Church which was considered as destroyed, ap-

peared in far greater splendour and apparent prosperity than at any former period.

But, how frequently is it seen that a state of prosperity and honour is attended with far greater dangers than the extreme of adversity and suffering? Amidst the "pompous apparatus, the superstitious rites, and unmeaning forms of piety," which prevailed in the Christian church during the splendid administration of the first Christian Emperor, how little can we discern of the spirit of genuine piety. It cannot be doubted that the transition from the racks and tortures of the Diocletian persecution, to the sunshine of imperial favour and patronage, would appear to the Christians of that age most desirable. They were delighted to see their sanctuaries rising from the ruinous condition, to which their furious persecutors had reduced them, to an unprecedented state of magnificence and splendour; to observe that their pastors, who had lately been driven into corners, were now highly honoured, and amply provided for, by the munificence of the sovereign; to see the Emperor himself presiding in their religious councils, and manifesting a concern for the preservation of the doctrines and discipline of the primitive Church; but they were little aware what a hydra of papal superstition would grow out of this state of things, and how far they had already proceeded towards the establishment of that antichristian delusion. Already were fatal errors propagated and defended by many professed Christians; monastic institutions and unauthorized rites already began to prevail; human traditions and the commandments of men had already in many respects superseded the authority of the written word; and the weapons which their heathen persecutors had just laid down, were now seized by different parties in the Christian church, and turned against each other. Must it not then be confessed, that this was rather a period of apparent, than of real prosperity?

On the reality of Constantine's conversion it is not our province to determine; but multitudes of facts might be collected to justify the assertion, that those impressions are very suspicious, to say the least, and often prove most fallacious, which are made by dreams and



visions, and phantoms of the imagination. How far a rational and scriptural conviction of the truth and excellency of the Christian religion might be afterwards produced in the mind of this heathen Emperor, by the perusal of the word of God, and the instructions of those pious men whom he consulted, we cannot determine; but the story of the blazing cross, and the use of this symbol as a military standard, savours more of the antichristian and fanatical spirit in which the crusades originated, than of the “words of truth and soberness,” which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The religious character of this prince would have been contemplated by sincere Christians with far greater pleasure, if instead of displaying his zeal and piety by instituting fasts and festivals, ceremonies and rites, which Christ has not ordained, he had “shewn out of a good conversation, his works with meekness and wisdom.” Christian charity, however, which “hopeth even against hope,” should teach us to attribute many of these inconsistencies of character to the shades of superstition which still beclouded his mind, and from which his spiritual guides themselves were by no means exempt; whilst they cannot be considered as forming the least excuse for the doctrinal or practical errors of those, who are placed in more favoured circumstances, and possess means of knowing the way of God more perfectly.

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## ESSAY XI.

*On the principal Writers of the Augustan and following Ages.*

A REMARKABLE difference may be observed in the history of Grecian and Roman Literature. In Greece, almost every species of intellectual eminence was attained at the same time. Some of the best philosophers, poets, historians, orators, and artists of that country, were cotemporaries. But in Rome, there were distinct ages,

in which the different branches of literature were cultivated with most success. Thus the latter years of the commonwealth may be distinguished as the age of *oratory*; the reign of Augustus, as that of *poetry*; the splendid administrations of Trajan and Adrian, as that of *history* and the *arts*; and the government of the Antonines, as that of *philosophy*. But when each of the above-mentioned periods is said to be characterized by its peculiar branch of literature, it will not be understood that all the rest were excluded; that, for example, all the men of learning who flourished under Augustus Cæsar, were poets; or that there were no distinguished orators after the death of Cicero, and the dissolution of the republic. The following rapid sketch of the progress and decline of Roman literature, and brief notice of the most distinguished writers, whose talents adorned the imperial government of Rome, will afford demonstration to the contrary; and prove that, though there may be a fashion in literary, as well as other pursuits, true genius cannot be fettered by such capricious laws.

Inspired by the genius, the taste, and the high reputation of Cicero; but especially, fostered by the patronage of Augustus and his friend Mæcenas, a numerous corps of literary combatants entered the lists, and contended for the wreath of imperishable fame. The first of these, both in order of time and merit, was VIRGIL, the prince of Roman Poets, who holds the same pre-eminent rank amongst the Latin, as Homer amongst the Greek writers. A summary of the life and writings of this justly admired poet is contained in the distich\* written by himself, and afterwards engraved upon his tomb, which informs us, that "he was born at Mantua, lived in Calabria, and was buried at Naples; and that the subjects on which his muse had been employed, related to shepherds, fields, and mighty chiefs." His principal poem is the "*Æneid*," in which he has successfully imitated, and, in elegance, refinement, and tenderness, far surpassed the Grecian epic bard. Yet this exquisite production, not having

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\* Mantua me genuit; Calabri rapuere; tenet nunc  
Parthenope; cecini pascua, rura, duces.



received its last polish from the hand of its author, was, according to the instructions of his will, to have been burnt; and was only preserved from the flames by the express command of Augustus, who had admitted him to his most intimate friendship. In this well-known epic poem, Virgil has manifested his gratitude to his imperial benefactor and patron, by sketching under the name of Æneas, a flattering portrait of Augustus, which is supposed to have contributed in no small degree to the popularity of that monarch. The excellence of his pastoral and didactic poetry, sufficiently proves, that his genius was equal to the execution of any task, which he might have undertaken.

HORACE, a native of Venusium, flourished at the same time, and shared with the poet of Mantua the favour and patronage both of Augustus and Mæcenas. He has been compared by some to Anacreon, and by others, to Pindar, amongst the Greeks. His poems are chiefly lyric; but his satirical and critical writings possess also considerable merit. Many of his odes are exquisitely beautiful, and interspersed with moral aphorisms of great value; but it is greatly to be lamented, that some of his pages are defiled by obscenity of thought and expression, that cannot be too severely censured. He died in the same year, in which Mæcenas, his illustrious friend and patron, to whom several of his poems were inscribed, expired, and within a very short period of that lamented event. OVID can scarcely be mentioned without disgust and abhorrence, on account of the degradation of his exalted talents and the pernicious influence of his writings. In proportion to the harmony of his numbers by which the ear is gratified, and the beauty of his descriptions by which the imagination and taste are delighted and charmed, is the mischief to be apprehended, from the licentiousness and impurity with which they are contaminated. It was stated in the reign of Augustus, that Ovid was banished by that monarch on account of the pruriency of his writings, which were justly considered as poisonous to the morals of the Roman youth. The place of his exile was Tomos, a city of Mæsia, near the Euxine sea; where he spent

the rest of his days in disgraceful obscurity. After having pined away seven or eight years in this desolate region, he died about the commencement of the reign of Tiberius. *TIBULLUS* and *PROPERTIUS* were also amongst the poets of the Augustan age, whose Elegies are chargeable with the faults, and by no means possess the beauties, which have been ascribed to those of Ovid. The thoughts are frequently quaint, and the style affected, in which they attempt to express the sentiments of nature, and the emotions of the heart.

In another department of literature flourished during this reign, three well-known historians, to whose valuable writings frequent reference has been made in preceding essays; *TITUS LIVIUS*, *DIONYSIUS* of Halicarnassus, and *CORNELIUS NEPOS*. The former of these stands unrivalled amongst the Latin historians, numerous and excellent as they were. Possessed of all the qualities requisite to the execution of so arduous an undertaking, he composed an elaborate history of Rome, which extended from the earliest records to the death of Drusus, in one hundred and thirty-two books, the greater part of which have perished in the wreck of former ages. Enough however has been preserved to establish his high reputation and justify the praises which have been given to him both by ancients and moderns, as a model to future historians, in purity of style and perspicuity of arrangement. He died at Padua, his native city, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and was deservedly eulogized by Seneca, as “possessing a genius equal to the grandeur and majesty of the Roman empire.”

*Dionysius* of Halicarnassus was both a critic and an historian. He wrote the “Antiquities of Rome” in twenty books, eleven of which only remain. As far as his researches extend, they include much minute information respecting the civil and religious rites, the customs and laws, that prevailed amongst the Romans in the earliest stages of their political history. But in these as in almost all the records of antiquity much fable is mixed with truth, and conjectures frequently occupy the place of authorized facts. *Cornelius Nepos* was a biographical historian, who briefly, but with much



elegance of diction, sketched the characters and lives of the most illustrious heroes of Greece and Rome.

The principal writers who flourished under Tiberius, were, *Velleius Paterculus*, who composed a history of the ancient Greeks, and also, an abridged Roman History, the greater part of which has been lost, and that which remains is of little value, since it can only be esteemed a highly-coloured panegyric on the worst of tyrants and oppressors;—*Valerius Maximus*, who collected the memorable sayings of the ancients in a work which is rather to be admired for the excellence of its subject, than for the style in which it was written;—*Strabo* and *Dionysius*, two celebrated geographers, the former of whom wrote a description of the earth, as it was known to the ancients, in seventeen books in prose; and the latter executed a similar work in Greek verse;—and *Phædrus*, who translated some of the fables of *Æsop* into Latin verse. Besides these authors, whose labours have either partially or wholly escaped the ravages of time, there were *Fenestella*, a poet and historian, and *Verrius Flaccus*, a grammarian, of whose once-celebrated writings, a few fragments alone remain. From the literary productions of this unhappy reign, it is evident that the taste of the Romans had greatly deteriorated since the Augustan age.

The reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, odious and tyrannical as they were, produced some men of distinguished literary eminence. The principal of these were, in philosophy, Cornutus and Seneca; in poetry, Persius and Lucan; in history, Quintus Curtius, Fabius Rusticus, and Servilius; and in rhetoric, Remmius Polemon. Cornutus was a stoic philosopher, who is best known as the preceptor of *Persius*, *Seneca*, and *Lucan*. The circumstances attending the death of the two latter have been related amongst the atrocities of Nero's reign; at present we have only to do with their literary character. *Lucan's* principal poem is entitled "*Pharsalia*," and is intended to describe in heroic verse, the history of the war between Cæsar and Pompey. His imagery is bold and striking, some passages are exquisitely tender and pathetic, but the general character of his style has been

censured by the best critics, as turgid and bombast. A poem written by him on the burning of Rome, together with several other poetical productions to which ancient writers have referred, have long since perished. *Persius* is only known as a satirist. The subjects of his satires are the faults of the orators and poets of his day, amongst whom the Emperor Nero himself is not spared. His poems obtained great celebrity when first written, though they now appear obscure and uninteresting, on account of our slight acquaintance with the characters and events to which his caustic raillery applies. *Seneca* was a stoic philosopher, who early accustomed himself to the austere habits of his sect, though he afterwards abandoned them for the luxuries of a court. He was an eloquent pleader, and a dramatic poet; but his reputation is principally founded upon his philosophical writings, which are replete with moral sentiments, of a more refined and exalted character than are usually found in pagan authors. If it were proposed to select out of the numerous tracts of this moral philosopher, those which possess a more than ordinary degree of excellence, the treatises on "anger," on "tranquillity of mind," on "a happy life," and upon the "shortness of life," would, it is presumed, be generally admitted amongst the number.

From the death of Nero to Domitian, the writers who excelled in the different departments of Roman literature; were, in poetry, Martial, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, Silius Italicus, and Juvenal; in rhetoric, Quintilian; in natural history and philosophy, Pliny the elder; and in history, Josephus, the well-known author of the "Antiquities and Wars of the Jews." Of the above-mentioned poets, none have maintained a high degree of reputation, but *Martial* and *Juvenal*, the former as an epigrammatist, and the latter, as a severe satirist of the manners of the degenerate age in which he lived. Yet these censors of others, while they professed to ridicule vice, introduced into their poems so many impure sentiments, that they cannot be perused without doing the utmost violence to decency and good morals. Valerius Flaccus wrote an epic poem on "the Argonautic expedition"—



Statius, two epic poems, entitled the “Thebais” and the “Achilleis,” the latter of which was left unfinished—and Silius Italicus, an heroic poem on the second Punic War. All these productions acquired a transient popularity, but have long since sunk into obscurity. Amongst the writers of this age, *Quintilian* alone deserves unqualified praise. In the earlier part of his life he was a distinguished pleader, but at a later period, he retired from public life and applied himself wholly to the composition of treatises on oratory and the rhetorical art, some of which are still extant, but others have perished. The first of these, (which some critics have ascribed to him, and others to Tacitus,) is a dialogue on the “causes of the decay of Eloquence.” This was followed by a didactic treatise on rhetoric, in twelve books, which has been classed by some amongst the purest and most elegant of ancient compositions, not unworthy, even of the pen of Cicero, or the age of Augustus. This celebrated orator was honoured with the consulship by Domitian, in whose tyrannical reign he flourished; though he is supposed to have been afterwards banished and reduced to poverty by that capricious tyrant. *Pliny*, usually called the elder, to distinguish him from his adopted son, was born at Verona, held many dignified and important offices during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, and (as stated in a former essay) was suffocated in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.\* The only production of his pen now extant is a “Natural History,” in thirty-seven books, which is chiefly interesting, as it affords the means of ascertaining the progress which had then been made in that branch of science.

The reigns of Nerva and Trajan were remarkable on account of the revival of taste and learning which took place at that time, and rendered the administration of the latter of these princes; an æra of no less importance in the literary, than in the political history of the empire. The most eminent of the *phalanx* of scholars that surrounded the standard of Trajan, were, the historians,

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\* Rom. Hist. Book III. Essay 6.

Tacitus, Suetonius, and Plutarch; Pliny the younger, a distinguished orator and statesman; and Julius Frontinus, a learned civilian, who wrote several elaborate treatises on military tactics and political economy. CORNELIUS TACITUS was the greatest orator of his day; but his posthumous fame has been perpetuated alone by his historical writings, which, in penetration of thought and energy of style, have seldom been equalled, and never excelled. The glow of patriotism, the abhorrence of tyranny in all its forms, the inviolable regard to truth, and the profound research, that pervade all his writings, give them an interest and importance, which can scarcely be over-rated. His first publication was the "*Life of Agricola*," a memoir which has been justly applauded, as an excellent model of biographical history, and one of the most valuable records of antiquity. His "*History*" was next written, which comprises the events that took place within the Roman empire, between the years 69 and 96 of the Christian æra. This was followed by his "*Annals*," which extended from the death of Augustus to that of Galba, though they have reached us in a very mutilated condition. His excellent treatise on the "*Manners of the Germans*," was amongst the last, but not the least valuable of his compositions. SÜETONIUS TRANQUILLUS wrote the history of the "Twelve Cæsars," if a partial selection of facts, and a distorted exhibition of character, accompanied with gross invective and splenetic satire, be worthy the name of history. Yet to this writer we are indebted for a more perfect knowledge of the manners of the Romans, and a more full development of the policy of the Cæsars, than could be obtained from any other quarter. He is also supposed to have written several works on grammar, and others on the laws and customs of the Romans, which are now only known by the citations of ancient authors. PLUTARCH, though a Greek by birth and education, must be classed with the scholars of Rome, since he was preceptor to Trajan, and continued at the Roman court, till the death of that Emperor. His writings were voluminous, some of which are lost, but a considerable number still remain. His Biographical History of the greatest men in Greece and



Rome, in which he has followed up and extended the design of Nepos, is too well known to need a description. It may not however be impertinent to remark, that the principal value of these memoirs consists in the moral sentiments they breathe, and their accurate representation of the private, as well as public life of the heroes of antiquity. **PLINY** the younger, was a most accomplished scholar, who excelled in almost every branch of literature, but especially that of oratory, in which he was only inferior to **Tacitus**. He was highly esteemed and promoted by **Trajan**, with whom he frequently corresponded on literary as well as on political subjects. Many of his letters are still extant, and afford the most beautiful specimens of elegant epistolary writing; but his poems, and many other productions of his pen, are lost. He was remarkable for disinterested benevolence, and superiority to that literary jealousy which has frequently dishonoured men of science and erudition; of which his liberality to **Quintilian** and **Martial**, when in reduced circumstances, were pleasing examples.

In adverting to the government of **ADRIAN**, that Emperor must be himself enumerated amongst the scholars of his age. For it is well known, that several works both in Greek and Latin were written by that monarch; amongst which were, an epic poem, entitled the “*Alexandriad*”—“*Dialogues between himself and Epictetus*” on Philosophy—Discourses on Language and Grammar—a volume of “*Military Institutes*”—and a Narrative of his own Life, which was fraught with vanity and self-adulation. **ARRIAN**, a native of Nicomedia, flourished at this period, who wrote the history of Alexander of Macedon, and that of his successors; the former of which is extant, but the latter, lost. In addition to these, he is said to have published the Life and Discourses of Epictetus, and the Histories of Bithynia, Parthia, and several other provinces, which **Trajan** had recently conquered. He was a man of extensive learning, and indefatigable research, who stood high in the confidence and esteem of the Emperor **Adrian**. **FLORUS** composed about this time his excellent epitome of Roman History, which contains, in an interesting, though compressed form, all

the principal facts contained in Livy's more extended and elaborate history. But the principal ornament of this splendid reign was EPICTETUS, the prince of stoic philosophers, to the commanding influence of whose talents and writings, is to be attributed the prevalence of philosophy during the two following reigns. He was a native of Phrygia, and originally a slave; amongst other philosophers, he was banished from Rome by Domitian; but after the death of that cruel despot, returned, and continued to live in the Roman capital, till the reign of Adrian. His whole system of philosophy was comprised in two words, "*suffer and abstain*," by which he taught the necessity of patiently submitting to the ills of life, and habitually refraining from sensual indulgences. None of his works have descended to our times, but his "*Manual*;" a volume that abounds with excellent moral, and even devotional sentiments.

The age of the Antonines was irradiated by a galaxy of philosophers, historians, orators, grammarians, and poets; of whom the limits of this work will admit little more than an enumeration of their names. The philosophical writings of Aurelius Antoninus himself have been already mentioned.\* But besides this imperial philosopher, there were at that time *Crescentius*, the Cynic; *Celsus*, the Epicurean; *Sextus*, the Stoic; *Aristocles*, the Peripatetic; *Alexander*, *Hermogenes*, and *Aristides*, the Sophists; with many others, belonging to all the different schools of philosophy. To these must be added, (though it is difficult to know under what head to class, or by what title to designate him,) the witty but blasphemous *Lucian*, whose enmity against the Christians, on account of the purity of their morals, and the sanctity of their religion, displays itself in almost every page of his writings.

About the same period flourished the historians, *Justin*, *Appian*, and *Pausanias*; the former of whom abridged the larger history of Trogus Pompeius, who flourished in the reign of Augustus—the second was a native of Alexandria, who wrote a Roman history in Greek, or

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\* Rom. Hist. Book III. Essay 8.



rather a separate history of all the nations subject to the Roman Emperors—the last, composed a kind of statistical history of Greece, in which he describes the antiquities and topography of its several cities, and introduces the most remarkable occurrences in their history. The same luminous æra was that in which *Ptolemy*, a celebrated astronomer and geographer—*Fronto*, a most distinguished orator—and his pupil, *Aulus Gellius*, whose “*Attic Nights*,” composed for the instruction of his children, are still extant—moved in their several spheres, and augmented the brightness of the surrounding hemisphere.

With the above-mentioned individuals, the history of Roman Literature may be considered as closed; for after the reign of the Antonines, the appearances of men of taste and learning were, “like angels’ visits, few, and far between.” Scarcely is there a writer of the succeeding ages who claims attention, if an exception be made in favour of *Diogenes Laertius*, the author of the “*Lives of the Philosophers*,” and *Galen*, the prince of physicians, both of whom flourished under Severus—*Dion Cassius*, who compiled during the reign of Alexander Severus, a Roman history in seventy-four books—*Longinus*, a Platonic philosopher put to death by Aurelian, whose excellent treatise on the “*Sublime*,” is the only production of his masterly pen which has escaped the ravages of time—and some eminent writers on the subject of Christianity, who will be more particularly adverted to in the next essay.

Collected from the writings of Seneca, Pliny, Aulus Gellius, Diogenes Laertius, Aurelius Victor, Suidas, Salmasius, Vossius, Lipsius, &c.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

The preceding sketch of Roman Literature from its highest elevation, to its most declining state, rapid and imperfect as it has necessarily been, suggests a variety of

important and salutary instructions. It appears from this retrospect, that there is a remarkable sympathy between the government of a country, and the progress or decline of its literary character. A mild administration and equal laws will certainly tend to the revival of letters, and, on the contrary, a system of intolerance and despotism will paralyze all the efforts of genius, and extinguish all the light of science. It should not be forgotten, that the brightest periods of Roman literature were during the mild and equitable reigns of Augustus, Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines; but that the succession of tyrants who filled up the intervals, manifestly depressed and ultimately destroyed all moral and intellectual excellence. Civil liberty and munificent patronage are calculated, not to say essential, to call forth the mightiest achievements of exalted genius, and the most polished productions of taste and science; and these will ever be found to mark the administration of upright and enlightened sovereigns.

How do the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the CREATOR appear in the variety of talents, and in the different degrees of intellect, with which his rational creatures are endowed. All the gradations which may be observed in the human mind, from that imbecility which borders on idiocy to the loftiest flights and most extensive range of which man is capable, are as necessary to the beauty, the harmony, and the perfection of the intellectual system, as the varieties of minerals, vegetables, and animals, are necessary to render the world of nature a perfect whole. In the latter case, all have their several degrees of utility and beauty; each class and order has its station, for which it is best fitted and in which it is most useful and ornamental: and, in the former, all are endowed with those measures of intelligence, which are best suited to the sphere in which they are called to move, or the stations which they are intended to occupy in the social system. Those then who are less splendidly endowed by the God of Nature, and who are placed in the scale of intellect far beneath the level of a Virgil, a Tacitus, or a Longinus, have no reason to envy their more illustrious brethren, or complain of the unequal dis-



tribution of natural gifts; since pre-eminence in these but involves a higher degree of responsibility and exposes to greater dangers and more oppressive sorrows. How many of these boasted sons of science, while, like the fabled Icarus, they have attempted, with their waxen wings, too bold a flight; or, like the Roman lyric bard, they have aspired to “touch the stars with their exalted heads,” have been suddenly precipitated into the abyss of infamy, the vortex of destruction!

It were well, if the wise and learned amongst mankind were duly to consider both their responsibility and their danger—if they were frequently and seriously to reflect upon the end for which they had been entrusted with superior powers of mind; the uses to which those powers should be applied; and the extensive good or evil which must result from the improvement or abuse of their exalted endowments—and, above all, if they were to exert those faculties, under an habitual and impressive sense of the account they will have to render at the tribunal of their Judge. Such recollections and impressions could not fail to purify and elevate their capacious minds—to stimulate them to holy ardour in the pursuit and communication of useful knowledge—and to render them luminaries of no ordinary splendour and magnitude, continually reflecting upon a dark world, their borrowed rays of truth and evangelical holiness; rays, which would perpetually brighten and strengthen, till they “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

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## ESSAY XII.

*On the Advocates and Opponents of CHRISTIANITY,  
during the three first centuries.*

THOUGH the subject of this concluding essay belongs more properly to ecclesiastical than to civil history, it will not be deemed irrelevant to the professed design of this work, that a brief notice be introduced of some of

those Christian heroes, who advocated a nobler cause, and obtained a brighter crown, than any of the warriors and statesmen whose names have been mentioned in the preceding pages. It is not ungrateful to step aside from the beaten track of political faction, and military achievements, for the purpose of breathing a purer air, and witnessing more splendid triumphs, obtained by the soldiers of the cross. Yet even here our pleasures are not unmixed. If the regions of primitive Christianity yield a rich abundance of fruits and flowers; they exhibit also some thorns and briars; and while contemplating with admiration and delight "the noble army of martyrs," we cannot be wholly regardless of the enemies to the cross of Christ; amongst whom are included those internal foes, who corrupted the faith and practice of the Church; and those more daring adversaries, who attempted to prove that the Gospel of Christ was a "cunningly devised fable."

In the first century, no ecclesiastical writer, is known to have flourished after the Apostles and Evangelists, but Clemens Romanus, or CLEMENT, the first pastor of the Roman Church, of whom honourable mention is made by the Apostle Paul, unless the work of Hermes be considered as a genuine relic of antiquity. There is still extant a letter to the Christians at Corinth, which is ascribed to Clement, and which, though written in a style that bears little resemblance to modern theology, is remarkable for its simple and fervent piety. Of this excellent man little more is known than that he presided nine years over the Christian Church at Rome, that he strenuously opposed the heretical sentiments which already began to prevail; and that he contended earnestly, yet with the "meekness of wisdom, for the faith once delivered to the saints." The errors that prevailed in that age have been classed by ancient writers under two general divisions; the former those of the *Gnostics* or *Docetæ*, of which sect Simon of Samaria, and Cerinthus, have been considered the principal founders; and the latter, those of the *Ebionites*, who were so called from Ebion, the leader of their party. The Gnostic heresy made most progress amongst the Gentile converts to



Christianity ; but that of Ebion chiefly prevailed amongst the converts from Judaism. The tenets of both these sects were manifestly alluded to, and controverted by the apostolical writers, and particularly the venerable evangelist John ; and after their death, by the several pastors who succeeded them in the instruction and government of the church. As yet the adherents to Christianity were either too few or too little known to call forth the literary talents of their heathen adversaries. Instead of attempting to confute the doctrines or disprove the statements, which Christian writers advanced, their persecutors adopted a more summary mode of suppressing this despised sect, that of exterminating them by fire and sword.

The second century, however, produced a great variety of literary champions on either side, of whom a few only can be enumerated in this place. Amongst the advocates of the Christian faith, who flourished, and most of whom suffered martyrdom, during the above-mentioned period, were *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, *Justin Martyr*, *Dionysius* of Corinth, *Theophilus* of Antioch, *Melito* of Sardis, *Pothinus* of Lyons, *Miltiades*, *Apollinarius*, and *Athenagoras*. The principal heretical writers of that age, were *Marcion*, *Theodotus*, *Montanus*, *Ammonius*, and *Praxeas*. The antagonists of the Christians, who obtained most celebrity in that age, were *Crescens*, *Celsus*, *Lucian*, *Fronto*, *Trypho* the Jew, and others.

*IGNATIUS* presided over the Christians at Antioch, from the days of the apostles, to the year 107 of the Christian æra, when he suffered martyrdom under Trajan. During his imprisonment, he imitated the illustrious example of the apostle Paul in writing epistles to the different Christian churches, seven of which have descended to our times. These were addressed to the disciples at *Magnesia*, *Tralles*, *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Philadelphia*, and *Rome*, besides one to his friend and fellow-sufferer *Polycarp*. The character which has been given of this illustrious martyr by an anonymous, but ancient writer, is abundantly confirmed by his own writings, and the concurrent testimony of all ages. “ He was a man in all things like the apostles ; as a skilful pilot, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his instructions

and spiritual labours, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary ; he was like a divine lamp illuminating the minds of the believers by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures ; and finally, to shelter his flock from persecution, he voluntarily exposed himself to a most cruel death."

*Polycarp* next claims attention, on account of the intimate friendship which subsisted between himself and the last-mentioned champion of the Christian faith. The scene of his labours through an unusually protracted life, was Smyrna, where he was probably stationed by the direction of the apostles, with some of whom he had been familiarly conversant. It was his greatest pleasure through life to relate what he had heard from the lips of these inspired writers, respecting the discourses and miracles of Jesus Christ. He escaped in the persecution of Trajan, though a character whose active zeal and eminent piety was likely to attract attention ; but, under Marcus Aurelius, he suffered martyrdom with unshaken constancy and holy triumph. Few of the writings of this Christian hero remain ; the principal are, an epistle to the Philippians, which breathes a truly apostolical spirit, and some fragments, preserved by Eusebius, and others of the Christian Fathers.

*Justin Martyr*, who has been alluded to in former essays as an able apologist for Christianity, was contemporary with Polycarp, and suffered a few years before that aged disciple. He was a native of Neapolis in Samaria, though of Grecian extraction. He was educated in all the learning of that age, and particularly in the different systems of philosophy which then prevailed. After having sought in vain some resting place for his inquiring mind in the regions of philosophical research, he became a sincere convert to Christianity, in which alone he found that *truth* which had so long eluded his inquiries. Convinced that true happiness could neither be found amongst the austerities of stoicism, or the licentiousness of the epicureans, he sought and found it in the Gospel of Christ. This accomplished scholar retained many of the habits, and wore the customary dress of the ancient philosophers, long after he had embraced



Christianity, either from attachment to the pursuits of his youthful days, or more probably from a desire to conciliate persons of that class, and win them over to the religion of Jesus. After his arrival at Rome, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, his first literary effort was, a tract written in vindication of the truth against the errors of Marcion, who propagated sentiments similar to those of modern Antinomianism. This was soon followed by his first "Apology" for the Christians, which is supposed to have impressed that amiable monarch with a favourable opinion of the cause he had so ably advocated. His next production was a Dialogue with Trypho, a learned Jew, and bitter enemy of Christianity, with whom he had met at Ephesus, and against whom he had maintained with great ability several public controversies. The combatant who next entered the lists with this pious and acute reasoner was Crescens the Cynic, who is said to have been constrained to acknowledge his conviction of the truth of Christianity, though his enmity to that truth prompted him to seek the destruction of the antagonist, whose arguments he had in vain attempted to overthrow. The last publication of Justin was his "Second Apology," addressed to Aurelius Antoninus, which, instead of softening the heart, and removing the prejudices of that monarch, but rendered him more furious against his christian subjects. This admirable confession was quickly followed by the martyrdom of its illustrious author.

DIONYSIUS of Corinth addressed many excellent letters to different Christian churches on the importance of unity, steadfastness, and perseverance, which were well suited to the circumstances in which they were placed, and the persecuting age in which he lived. They were written during the reigns of Aurelius and Commodus. THEOPHILUS of Antioch, like Justin Martyr, had been, previously to his reception of Christianity, a philosopher of no ordinary rank, and after his conversion employed all the energies of his mind in unwearied efforts to propagate the truths he had embraced. MELITO of Sardis distinguished himself by an excellent Apology, which he drew up and presented to the Emperor Aurelius, but

which was not more successful than that of Justin had been. To escape the sword of persecution, he withdrew for a time from his pastoral duties, and travelled through Asia and Greece, collecting as he passed along much valuable information respecting the canonical books of the New Testament, which was afterwards published for the benefit of the churches. Some fragments of his writings are still extant. POTHINUS of Lyons, was probably a native of Greece driven into Gaul by persecution, where he became pastor of a Christian church, and was eminently useful. To his pen, through the medium of Eusebius, we are indebted for our earliest information of the Gallic churches and martyrs. MILTIADES examined into the subject of miracles, and endeavoured to discriminate between those which were well-authenticated, and those which were fabulous and pretended. APOLLINARIUS and ATHENAGORAS wrote also two vindications of the Christian religion from the calumnies of its adversaries, of which honourable mention is made by ancient ecclesiastical writers.

To describe the peculiar tenets of the Marcionites, the Montanists, the Eclectics, and other sects, that sprang up during this century, or to refer particularly to the character and writings of their respective leaders, would be to enter upon too wide a field. Nor is it necessary to advert to any of the direct opponents of the Christian religion at this period, except one, the celebrity of whose writings renders their author an object of more than ordinary attention. This was Celsus, one of the most able and skilful of the combatants on the side of heathenism, who attempted, by sophistry, the same unhallowed task, which his friend Lucian had long attempted, by wit and satire. In the reign of Antoninus, he wrote a virulent treatise against Christianity, entitled "True Discourses," the malicious falsehood of which was fully exposed in an elaborate reply written long after by the celebrated Origen. He is also supposed to have been the author of some tracts against magic, to which, in that superstitious age, there were many pretenders.

In the third century, the number of distinguished advocates of Christianity was greatly increased, but



much of the "simplicity and godly sincerity," which characterized their predecessors was exchanged for speculative refinements, and philosophical corruptions. If this remark be not applicable to all, it applies with too much justice to the most eminent Christian writers of that age. The first name that occurs is that of IRENÆUS, a disciple of the venerable Polycarp, and, after the death of Pothinus, a bishop of Lyons. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom under Severus. Those of his writings which remain, relate principally to the heresies which then prevailed, and which he refutes with much talent and piety. In another and distant province of the Roman empire, flourished about the same time TERTULLIAN, the most ancient of the Latin Fathers, the most valuable part of whose numerous writings, is his admirable "Apology," occasioned by the persecuting measures of Severus, which is a beautiful specimen of Christian eloquence. In other respects this writer is rather to be censured than admired, on account of the ascetic gloom and monkish austerity that pervade his theological compositions. Towards the close of life, he avowed himself a Montanist, and openly advocated the cause of that heretical sect. MINUCIUS FÆLIX was contemporary with Tertullian, and like him an eloquent Christian advocate. He had been a Roman orator, and after his conversion exerted all the force of his eloquence in defence of the sacred truths he had embraced, and the despised followers of Christ. He wrote an elaborate vindication of his brethren, in a "Dialogue between a Christian and a Heathen," which for purity of style and genuine eloquence would not have disgraced the age of Cicero.

Alexandria was at this time the eastern seat of learning; here Christian schools were instituted, which produced some of the brightest literary ornaments of that age. Amongst many others, there are three which claim particular attention, Pancœnus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen. All these belonged to the Eclectics, who have been accused of combining the systems of ancient philosophy with Christian doctrine, and thus corrupting by human speculations the Gospel of Christ. Ancient

tradition reports, that to PANCENUS we are indebted for the discovery of the Gospel of Matthew in India, whither he had gone in the humble but useful character of a missionary. Whether this tradition be well founded or not, it is universally admitted, that his great learning and profound investigation were directed to the confirmation of the Canon of Scripture. From the writings of CLEMENS, his disciple and successor, much information may be collected respecting the state of Christianity in his day. He also wrote a volume of exhortations to the Gentiles, consisting of dissuasives from idolatry, and arguments in support of the religion of Jesus. But the most renowned of the Alexandrian scholars, was ORIGEN, who, though he had drank too deeply into the philosophizing spirit of the age, must be acknowledged to have been an illustrious champion, and a most powerful advocate of our holy religion. His efforts were principally directed to the defence of the outworks of Christianity against the common foe. If no other of his numerous compositions remained, his reply to Celsus would be sufficient to establish his reputation as a sound and acute disputant. Nor did this accomplished scholar merely employ his pen in defence of the truth; he suffered much in the persecutions of SEVERUS, MAXIMIN, and DECIUS; was repeatedly imprisoned and cruelly tortured, though his life was spared by his persecutors, probably from a regard to his literary reputation. He died in peace, at an advanced age, about the time of Valerian's captivity.

Whilst Origen was usefully and zealously engaged in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, CYPRIAN of Carthage, a man of eminent piety and zeal, who was formed upon the models of the primitive disciples, laboured indefatigably in confirming the African churches by his letters and personal instructions, and maintaining the purity and simplicity of evangelical doctrine and discipline against all who attempted to pervert them. In his time the Novatian sect arose, so called, from *Novatus*, a presbyter of Carthage, a man of an ambitious temper and immoral character, who occasioned much grief to the venerable and apostolic Cyprian. The Novatians differed from their brethren rather in discipline



than in doctrine, and introduced into their societies many of those austerities which afterwards gave rise to monastic institutions. A far more alarming schism was occasioned towards the end of this century, by *Paul* of Samosata, who aimed at the subversion of the Christian faith, by denying the Deity of the Son of God, and maintaining other radical and pernicious errors, which were deemed so fraught with danger to the whole church, that a synod was convened of not less than seventy pastors of Christian churches, by whom the heretical writings of Paul were publicly condemned, and their author was first deposed, and afterwards excluded from communion.

The most formidable opponent of the Christians during this age was Porphyry, a Tyrian, who was either a proselyte to Judaism, or assumed that character, that he might attack with greater virulence the objects of his inveterate enmity. Some have supposed that Porphyry was an apostate from Christianity, but of this there is not sufficient evidence. He was a disciple of the celebrated Longinus, a Platonic philosopher, and a man of profound erudition. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish and Christian scriptures, in which he professed to discover many contradictions and falsehoods. His cavils and calumnies were ably refuted by Methodius, Eusebius, and others, who flourished in the beginning of the following century. Some of the most valuable indirect proofs of the truth and divine origin of Christianity have been deduced from the concessions and statements of this bitter and implacable adversary. Thus were the counsels of this boasted Ahithophel turned into foolishness, and the curses of this second Balaam turned into involuntary blessings.

Excerpt. de Oper. Euseb. Lactant. Theodoret. Hieronym. Tertull. Clem. Alex. Orig. &c.

## REFLECTIONS.

Amongst the numerous and splendid miracles that were wrought in confirmation of the truth and divine authority of the Gospel, scarcely can one be found more convincing and irresistible than that which was displayed in the propagation of Christianity itself. If the circumstances attending its first promulgation be considered—if the character and condition of its primitive advocates—the confederacy that was formed against them—the strong and apparently overwhelming tide of opposition with which they had to struggle—the various measures adopted by their enemies to frustrate their endeavours, and (had it been possible) to blot out their very names from the earth—if these, with many other counteracting circumstances, be attentively considered, it will appear that nothing less than a perpetual miracle could have perpetuated and built up the Church of God. Had the religion of Jesus been of men, it could not have endured such a test—but its introduction, its protection, and its abundant increase, notwithstanding the combined efforts of all the powers of darkness, prove it to have been from heaven, and demonstrate the justice of its claims, when it challenges our faith, as “the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.”

A religion so manifestly divine could not stand in need of human support, though the divine Head of the Church may sometimes have seen fit to employ such feeble agents. It rests not its claims upon the genius, the learning, or the eloquence of those, who have at different periods advocated its sacred cause. No human authority, however great, nor any of the most honoured names amongst men, can add to the splendour or dignity of a religion which emanates from the Eternal Fountain of Light. Yet it is gratifying to see the mightiest efforts of genius, the most copious stores of learning, the sweetest flowers of taste, and the richest streams of eloquence, poured forth at the feet of Jesus, and consecrated to his service. If it were of importance to measure



swords with the enemies of the Gospel, the advocates of evangelical truth have no reason to shrink from the combat. To their Celsus's, Porphyrys, and Lucians, we can confidently oppose our Origens, Tertullians, and Justin Martyrs, who turned back with confusion and dismay all the enemies of Zion in the day of battle, and made their hostile weapons recoil upon themselves. Nor is it less gratifying to observe, that most of these Christian Heroes, after having triumphantly refuted all the sophisms and calumnies of the adversary, set their seals to the holy doctrines they had maintained, by a glorious martyrdom.

The period of Church history which has been contemplated, as well as every succeeding century to the present day, confirms the representation given by our Saviour, in one of his most beautiful parables, of the origin and progress of his kingdom. For how soon did it appear that wherever the good seed of divine truth had been scattered by the holy Apostles and their successors, there also the enemy had sown tares. These pernicious, and, in some instances, deadly plants sprang up in every direction, corrupting the churches almost as soon as they had been planted, and perverting many from the "truth as it is in Jesus." In this imperfect state, what good is there unmixed with evil? What is there so pure, so exalted, so divine, as to have escaped the contaminating touch of human depravity? Even Christianity itself has been perverted, corrupted, defiled, by the ignorance and immorality of its false professors. But our Saviour has taught us in the same parable, that these tares of error and false doctrine are not to be plucked up by violence; that even heresy is not to be extirpated by penal and persecuting laws; but, having, by the manifestation of the truth, commended ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, we are to wait the general harvest, when he who is emphatically, "The Truth," will finally separate between the righteous and the wicked.

If the whole of the preceding history be compared with the brief hints which have been occasionally introduced, respecting the progress of Christianity; it will appear most evident, that the spiritual kingdom of the

Messiah is widely different from those empires which are temporal and worldly. We have seen the Roman empire, like a boisterous torrent, rushing forward with desolating fury, till it inundated the world, and made it a dreary waste. In tracing a series of more than 1100 years, we have seen that gigantic monarchy founded in rapine and murder, extended by carnage and oppression, and finally dismembered and crushed by the same ponderous engines, which it had employed for the destruction of others. But not such was the manner in which the empire of the Son of God was introduced and established in the earth. When He appeared, "the mountains brought peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." The benign and fertilizing influence of his government is beautifully compared to the silent descent of rain upon the mown grass, and of showers that water the earth. Christianity, like a pure and chrystal stream, has quietly, but rapidly, glided along from age to age, from land to land, dispensing, through all its majestic course, the richest blessings; nor will it cease to flow, till it shall have visited, refreshed, and fertilized the whole earth. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."



# HISTORICAL QUESTIONS.

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## BOOK I.

### ESSAY

1. What was the state of Italy before the building of Rome?  
By whom was it inhabited?  
Who were the Etruscans, and what was their character?  
Who were the most ancient kings of Latium?  
What occasioned the war between the Rutuli and Latins?  
Who founded Alba, and what kings reigned there?  
By whom, and in what year was Rome built?  
What moral instruction does the origin of Rome suggest?
2. Who was the first King of Rome, and how long did he reign?  
How did he divide the population of Rome?  
What form of civil government did he institute?  
What religious rites did he introduce, and whence were they devised?  
What caused the first Sabine war?  
How, and by what means did it terminate?  
What occasioned the death of Romulus?  
What reflections are suggested by his character and administration?
3. Who was the second King of Rome, and how long did he reign?  
What was his private, and what his public character?  
What orders of priesthood did he institute, and what were their several offices?  
Who succeeded him in the government, and what was his character?  
How was the dispute between the Albans and Romans decided?  
Who was the fourth King of Rome, and what were the principal objects of his reign?  
What were the excellencies and defects of Numa Pompilius?  
What are the evils arising from unrestrained ambition?
4. Who was the fifth King of Rome, and where did he reign?  
What was his general character before and after his election?  
What public works did he execute?  
Who succeeded him, and by what means?  
What political regulations did Servius Tullius introduce?  
What were the circumstances and manner of his death?

## ESSAY

- Who was the last King of Rome, and what was his character?  
 How did he act towards the Gabii?  
 To what reflections does the history of the Tarquins lead?
5. What event led to the expulsion of the Tarquins?  
 When did it take place, and who were its principal agents?  
 What form of government was substituted for the regal?  
 Who were the first Consuls of Rome?  
 To what places did Tarquin and his family retire?  
 What reflections are suggested by the character of Sextus?  
 What, by the suicide of Lucretia?
6. Wherein did the patriotism of Brutus and Publicola differ?  
 What anecdotes are related of Brutus in his juvenile days?  
 What danger first threatened the Republic, and how prevented?  
 Who were the chief conspirators?  
 What was the conduct of Brutus and Collatinus on this occasion, and what the result?  
 Who succeeded Collatinus in the Consulship, and what was his character?  
 How did Brutus die, and what honours were paid to his memory?  
 Who was Porsena, and what facts are related of him?  
 What estimate are we to form of Roman virtue?
7. What circumstances led to the creation of a Dictator?  
 What was the nature, duration, and extent of his authority?  
 Who was first created Dictator, and in what year?  
 What caused the secession of the Roman legions?  
 Who were the leaders of that secession, and what was its issue?  
 What were the office and authority of the Tribunes?  
 What are the reciprocal duties of the rich and poor?
8. Who was Coriolanus, and when did he flourish?  
 To what did he owe his name and reputation?  
 What was the office of the *Ædiles*?  
 Under what pretence was Coriolanus banished?  
 With whom did he associate after his exile?  
 What design did he meditate, and how was it prevented?  
 What were the circumstances of his death?  
 To what moral uses may his history be applied?
9. What was the purport of the Agrarian Law?  
 By whom was it first proposed, and with what success?  
 What was the object of the Terentian Law?  
 What was the character of Cincinnatus?  
 What signalized his Dictatorship?  
 Who were the Commissioners sent into Greece?  
 Who were the Decemviri, and when were they appointed?  
 What reflections are suggested by their appointment?  
 What, by the character of Cincinnatus?
10. What was the subsequent conduct of the Decemviri?



## ESSAY

- What was the character and death of Siccus Dentatus?  
 What event led to the abolition of the Decemvirate?  
 Who were the parties concerned in effecting it?  
 What was the conduct of the Roman armies on that occasion?
- What opinion are we to form of the conduct of Virginius?  
 What reflections are suggested by Virginia's death?
11. What led to the creation of Military Tribunes?  
 What was their office, and when were they first chosen?  
 Who were the Censors, and what was their office?  
 By whom and in what manner was Veii captured?  
 What was the conduct of the Romans to Camillus?  
 What occasioned the invasion of the Gauls?  
 What was its issue, and when did it take place?  
 What remarks are suggested by the capture of Rome?
12. What was the religion of the ancient Romans?  
 What was the fabulous origin of the Sibylline volumes?  
 What branch of Literature was first cultivated in Rome?  
 What species of knowledge was most successfully cultivated?  
 Who were the first Roman orators?  
 To what was the attention of the Romans principally directed?  
 What reflections are suggested by the review of Roman Literature in its earliest period?

## BOOK II.

1. What followed the rebuilding of the city?  
 What was the character and end of M. Manlius?  
 What circumstances led to the election of Plebeian Consuls?  
 Who were the Prætors and Curule Ædiles, and what their offices?  
 When did Camillus die, and in what manner?  
 What reflections are suggested by the fall of Manlius?
2. What expedients were tried for the removal of the plague?  
 How did the younger Manlius shew his filial affection?  
 What occasioned the Samnite war?  
 How long did it last, and what was its character?  
 What was the conduct of the Roman legions at Capua?  
 How did Decius die, and for what purpose?  
 What disaster befel the Romans at the Caudine straits?  
 What moral lessons does the Samnite war teach?
3. What caused the Tarentine war, and when did it begin?  
 Who did the Tarentines invite to their aid?  
 Who was his confidential friend, and what advice did he give?

## ESSAY

- What Roman generals conducted the Tarentine war?  
 What was the character and conduct of Fabricius?  
 What was the issue of the war?  
 What reflections are suggested by the characters of Fabricius and Pyrrhus?
4. What was the origin of Carthage?  
 What led to the first Punic war, and at what time?  
 For what was Duilius celebrated?  
 What was the character and conduct of Regulus?  
 When and upon what terms was peace concluded?  
 What reflections are suggested by the conduct of Carthage?  
 What, by the character of Regulus?
5. When was the temple of Janus first shut?  
 What caused the second Punic war?  
 What measures were first adopted by Hannibal?  
 Which were his most splendid victories?  
 To what Roman generals was he opposed?  
 What was the policy of Fabius, and what its success?  
 What remarks are suggested by the character and conduct of Hannibal?
6. What was Hannibal's conduct after the battle of Cannæ?  
 What was the consequence of that conduct?  
 What new Roman generals turned the scale of victory?  
 What occasioned the recall of Hannibal from Italy?  
 What is related of Massinissa?  
 Where was the last battle fought between Hannibal and Scipio?  
 What were the conditions of peace between Rome and Carthage?  
 What do the events of the second Punic war teach?
7. When did the Romans invade Greece, and with what success?  
 Who conducted the Macedonian war, and how did it terminate?  
 What was the next foreign enterprise of the Romans?  
 Where did Scipio die, and under what circumstances?  
 Who was Cato the Censor, and what was his general character?  
 What led to the destruction of Carthage?  
 How was it effected, and what happened in the same year?  
 What remarks are suggested by the character of Cato?  
 What, by the fall of Carthage?
8. Who were the Gracchi, and what was their general character?  
 When did they flourish, and for what were they remarkable?  
 By whom were they educated, and what was their literary progress?  
 What political measures did Tiberius Gracchus propose?  
 In what manner did he die?  
 What circumstances occasioned the death of Caius Gracchus?  
 What was the state of Rome at that time?



## ESSAY

- What moral instruction does the death of the Gracchi convey?
9. Who was Caius Marius, and when did he flourish?  
 Who was his political rival, and what was his character?  
 What wars did they undertake, and with what success?  
 What circumstances attended the exile of Marius?  
 What was his conduct after his return to Rome?  
 How did Sylla act after the death of Marius?  
 What office did Sylla hold, and for how long?  
 What remarkable circumstances attended the death of Marius and Sylla?  
 What instruction do their lives convey?
10. Who attempted the government of Rome after Sylla?  
 What was the Servile war, and by whom conducted?  
 What were the characters of Pompey and Crassus?  
 Where were the principal scenes of Pompey's victories?  
 What formidable conspiracy threatened the republic?  
 By whose vigilance, and in what manner was it detected?  
 What new rival now appeared, and what was his character?  
 Who formed the first Triumvirate, and when did it take place?  
 What do the jealousies and alliance of these rivals teach?
11. What caused the civil war between Pompey and Cæsar?  
 Who were the partisans on either side?  
 Where were the battles fought that decided the contest?  
 What was the conduct of Cæsar after his victories?  
 What became of Pompey after his defeat?  
 To what reflections does his history lead?
12. Who was Poreius Cato, and what his education?  
 What offices did he sustain, and how did he discharge them?  
 What was his conduct after Pompey's death?  
 Who were associated with him at Utica?  
 What were the circumstances of his death?  
 What opinions have been formed of his character?  
 How was Cæsar affected by his death?  
 What estimate does Christianity lead us to form of the character and conduct of Cato of Utica?
13. How was Julius Cæsar received at Rome?  
 What was the issue of the war in Spain?  
 What was Cæsar's conduct after that event?  
 What public works did he project and execute?  
 What caused a conspiracy to be formed against him?  
 Who were the leaders of that conspiracy?  
 What was its issue, and when did it take place?  
 What were the excellencies and faults of Julius Cæsar!
14. What renders the character of Cicero peculiarly interesting?  
 Where was he born, and who were his preceptors?  
 Where did he travel, and for what purposes?  
 For what was he most celebrated through life?  
 What occasioned his exile, and how was he affected by it?  
 Who obtained his recall, and how was he received?

## ESSAY

- What domestic calamities befel him?  
 How did he die, and in what year?  
 What moral lessons are taught by the life of Cicero?
15. What events introduced Grecian literature into Rome?  
 What philosophical sects prevailed there?  
 Who were the most distinguished philosophers in each?  
 Who were the most ancient Roman poets?  
 Who, the best prose writers?  
 Who, the most celebrated orators?  
 What does the review of Roman literature teach?



### BOOK III.

1. What impression was made at Rome by Julius Cæsar's death?  
 Who formed the second Triumvirate?  
 What became of Brutus and Cassius?  
 What was the end of Antony and Cleopatra?  
 How was Octavius received at Rome?  
 Who was the first Roman Emperor, and when did he begin to reign?  
 What remarks are suggested by the death of Brutus and his associates?  
 What, by the conduct of Antony and Cleopatra?
2. What was the general character of Augustus Cæsar?  
 What, the character of his administration?  
 What were his domestic sorrows?  
 What most important event took place during his reign?  
 What circumstances attended his old age and death?  
 To what reflections does the character of Augustus lead?
3. Who succeeded him, and in what year?  
 What was the character of his successor?  
 Who was Germanicus, and how was he treated by Tiberius?  
 Who was the favourite of Tiberius, and what was his conduct?  
 What occasioned his fall, and how was it effected?  
 What was the most remarkable event in this reign?  
 How did Tiberius die, and by whom was he succeeded?  
 What was the character of his successor?  
 How did that tyrant end his days, when, and where?  
 What remarks are suggested by the characters of Tiberius and Caligula?
4. Who succeeded Caligula, and what was his character?  
 What were the names, and character of his two wives?  
 What is recorded of Petus and Arria?  
 How did Claudius die, and who reigned after him?  
 Wherein did the beginning and end of Nero's reign differ?



## ESSAY

- What celebrated Christian and heathen writers did he put to death?
- When did the first persecution of the Christians take place?
- How did Nero die, and in what year?
- What remarks are suggested by the lives of Claudius and Nero?
5. What events followed the death of Nero?
- Who became competitors for the crown, and what was their end?
- What led to the elevation of Vespasian?
- What formed the prominent feature of Vespasian's reign?
- What calamity befel the Jews in this reign?
- What reflections arise from those calamities?
6. Who were Vespasian's sons, and what was their character?
- What remarkable events took place in the reign of Titus?
- What is related of the manner of his death?
- What was the conduct of Domitian to Agricola?
- Who were the chief objects of Domitian's hatred?
- What Christians suffered martyrdom under him?
- What occasioned his death, and by whom was it effected?
- What reflections are suggested by the contrast of Titus and Domitian?
7. Who succeeded Domitian, and in what year?
- Who was Trajan, and by whom was he educated?
- What military enterprises did he undertake?
- What was his conduct to the Christians?
- Who were the most distinguished Martyrs of that day?
- What good qualities did Trajan possess?
- Who was Adrian, when, and how long did he reign?
- What were the principal objects of his reign?
- How did he die, and what were his last words?
- What moral instruction do the lives of Trajan and Adrian convey?
8. Who were Adrian's adopted sons that succeeded him?
- What was the public and private character of Antoninus Pius?
- By what means was he favourably impressed towards Christians?
- What was the education and character of Aurelius?
- Who were his preceptors, and in what did he excel?
- How did he treat the Christians, and what altered his conduct?
- What calamities took place in his reign?
- What do the character and conduct of the Antonines teach?
9. Who succeeded Aurelius, and what was his character?
- What Emperors reigned between Commodus and Diocletian?
- Were any of them good Monarchs, and which?
- Which of them persecuted the Christians?
- When and by whom was the empire put up to sale?
- What was the state of the empire at this period?
- What reflections are suggested by these tyrannical reigns?

## ESSAY

- What, by the character of Alexander Severus?
10. Who was Diocletian, and what his general character?  
 What new system of policy did he adopt?  
 Who were his associates, and what their characters?  
 What was the situation of the Christians at this time?  
 What was the latter conduct of Diocletian?  
 Who was Constantine, and whom did he succeed?  
 What induced him to profess Christianity?  
 What was the principal object of Constantine's reign?  
 What was the situation, name, and character of the new metropolis?  
 What was the subsequent conduct of Constantine?  
 By whom, and at what periods was Rome taken and plundered?  
 What remarks are suggested by the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, and by the fall of the Roman empire?
11. When were the ages of Oratory, Poetry, History, and Philosophy in Rome?  
 Who were the principal writers of the Augustan age?  
 Who flourished under Tiberius, and in what departments?  
 Who, in the reigns of Claudius, Caligula, and Nero?  
 Who, from Nero to Domitian?  
 Who, under Nerva, Trajan, and Adrian?  
 Who, under the Antonines?  
 Who, under the succeeding emperors?  
 To what moral reflections does the review of Roman literature lead?
12. What Christian writers flourished in the first century?  
 Who advocated Christianity in the second century?  
 Who founded heretical sects in that age?  
 Who wrote against the Christians at that period?  
 Who were the Christian Apologists of the third century?  
 Who, the most learned of its heathen opponents?  
 What are the concluding reflections on this subject?

*THE END.*



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